A MODERNIST AND HIS CREED

By

EDWARD MORTIMER CHAPMAN

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A MODERNIST AND HIS CREED.

COMPANIONS OF THE WAY.

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN ACCOUNT WITH RELIGION.

THE DYNAMIC OF CHRISTIANITY.
A Study of the Vital and Permanent Element in the Christian Religion.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

A MODERNIST AND HIS CREED

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A MODERNIST AND HIS CREED

BY
EDWARD MORTIMER CHAPMAN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO

LOUISE WADSWORTH CHAPMAN

WITH THE AUTHOR'S

LOVE AND DUTY

84007

PREFACE

THIS book was planned and partly written with the purpose of anonymous publication, because of the author's disinclination to any venture into autobiography. That purpose was finally abandoned, however, for two reasons: first, because, with the exception of occasional editorial work, it has always been his custom to sign what he has written; and, second, because it seemed probable that a record of experience must sacrifice a good part of any authority it might otherwise have if the experience were not personally acknowledged. Value attaches and must always attach to the spiritual adventures of plain and undistinguished folk. There are so many of these that their success or failure in finding a Way through Life gives the spiritual topographer the numerous points of contact with reality he needs in order to plot a practicable path for others. But to be worth anything, the story of them must be free from taint of self-advertisement. With this fact in mind, the author has studied economy in setting forth personal experience and much has been omitted for which, if he were attempting autobiography, the reader might have a right to ask.

Nor is he anxious to enter the field of controversy either against the 'Fundamentalist' or for the 'Modernist.' These names, indeed, seem to him rather ephemeral and likely to be forgotten to-

morrow; and nothing but what Dr. Johnson once called 'the clamour of the times' has induced him to attach one of them to his title. He confidently believes that there is no necessary conflict between man's experience of his world as set forth by modern scholarship and a positive religious faith. Yet 'Modernism,' however defined, must have some positive content, and 'Fundamentalism' must take account of growing experience, or both will be deservedly spewed out of the thoughtful man's mouth. So he has set down what his journey has taught him, emphasizing the vital things that remain rather than the clothes that have been worn out upon it. If the pages that follow are not always marked by the staid and solemn manner that is mistakenly supposed to befit the theme of religion, it is because these vital things are so many and most of them so cheerful.

E. M. C.

Westways
New London, Connecticut
15 *October*, 1925

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A MODERNIST AND HIS CREED

CHAPTER I

THE FRAME OF THE PICTURE

I WAS born into a New England family of the elder type. It was a 'Christian' family, as literary people commonly use that term; and its faith and practice were, moreover, of an 'evangelical' sort. Ours was the only Established Church which that part of New England had ever known — the Congregational; and of our particular church my parents and paternal grandparents who lived together were all members. The Puritan tradition was maintained. Sunday was strictly kept. At least two and sometimes three services were attended. Emphasis was put upon the Sunday School which we children were expected, not only to attend, but to prepare for, either with or without the assistance of our elders as we chose. Family prayers were conducted by my father in the big room occupied by him and my mother; and after my grandfather's death these became a service for all the household. Then, too, grace began to be said at table.

It was thus a family in whose thought and life religion played a great part. The emphasis fell, to be sure, upon matters of conduct and worship rather than upon theological opinion. Orthodoxy of belief

was, indeed, taken for granted except upon those occasions when my grandfather furbished up and brought out for inspection one or two small and pet heresies that he claimed to cherish; and this was done rather with a view to teasing my very earnest and matter-of-fact mother than because he was really wedded to them. The only one of these that I remember was his doubt concerning the existence of a personal devil. I do not think that my mother was particularly concerned about the Devil's existence, since she knew that there was something very like him abroad at times among her big flock of children, but such a doubt made a rift in the well-articulated system of her belief and was to be withstood on the principle that leads a dike-keeper or a levee-patrol to give instant attention to the smallest leak. Young as I was, I knew her anxiety that my youthful mind should be kept free from the least acquaintance with heresy, and at the same time felt that she need not have worried, because I understood my whimsical grandfather's liking for 'getting a rise' out of her, and was prepared to make all necessary allowances.

Grandfather was something of a man of the world. His vigorous mind was of distinctly a progressive and adventurous type; varied business interests had necessitated considerable travel, though he had never been abroad; and residence upon land that had been in our family since the settlement of the country had enhanced a natural antiquarian bent; so that he presented the somewhat unusual phenomenon of a man who lived much in the past,

retained a rather stately and Old-World form of address, and yet was keenly alive to new inventions and ways of doing things. The first gun with percussion locks seen in our neighborhood was said to have been introduced by him. He was interested in bringing to the fishing industry of our coast a new style of trap that for many years proved exceedingly effective; and when rubber or gutta-percha overshoes were in their crude beginnings he had a pair. Indeed, he never ceased to tell with gusto of a visit from his friend, the Reverend Doctor Field, father of the famous sons, one of whom laid the first Atlantic cable. Early one morning Doctor Field proposed to walk to the sea. The dew was heavy and it was suggested that he wear the new device. A kindred spirit to my grandfather, he was not only quick to assent, but must needs comment upon this evidence of progress. 'It is a wonderful provision of Providence,' quoth he, as he thrust one foot into an overshoe, brought it down with a stamp to force his boot into place, and smashed the brittle gutta-percha to flinders in the process.

My grandfather's fondness for an elder style of speech, especially upon formal or solemn occasions, may be illustrated by his request to the clergyman who called upon him in his last illness: 'Be pleased, Sir, to approach the Throne of Grace in my behalf.' This serves, too, to suggest his general attitude toward religion and its observances. A reverent worshipper at the stated services of the Church, a supporter of good causes, and a man of unimpeachable integrity, he was not altogether sympathetic

toward some forms of religious expression. 'Revival services' would not have been to his liking, and in regard to religion as a personal concern he was studiously reticent, though his active and inquiring mind was by no means averse to occasional theological discussion.

My grandmother's character and influence may be more briefly dismissed, though with regret, because of my peculiar sympathy with and affection for her. Short, comely, active, strong-willed, humorous, and perhaps too indulgent to her grandson, she won my heart as a child; and, when my passion for field sports developed and she exulted with me over the first fruits of my gun and fishing boat, that bond was cemented for all time. Others might speak slightingly of a handful of snipe, a single teal, or a half-dozen small bluefish or cunners. She not only rejoiced with him who shyly rejoiced, but exalted these exiguous products of the chase to a high place upon the family table, perhaps cooked by her own hands. Little she knew how far the candle of her sympathy would throw its beams.

She was a devout woman, but shared in good measure my grandfather's reticence upon topics of 'personal' religion; and I remember to have been considerably impressed when my father once told me how in his boyhood she used to read the Bible and pray with him. It did not seem quite like her — although I distinctly remembered her setting me to read aloud to her the first verses of the Fourth Gospel when I could scarce spell their simplest words — yet, if she did so, it was evidently a good

thing to do, and any experiment that my own parents might make in the same direction would have higher justification because of this precedent. I do not remember to have seen another instance in which similarity of taste and mutual affection so completely bridged a gap of seventy years between youth and age.

Only twenty years separated me from my mother. At nineteen she had been married to my father who was ten years her senior. It is difficult for me to realize that my first memories of her, a busy and mature woman surrounded by a rapidly growing family, are of one whom we to-day should call a girl. She was one of the most competent persons, both intellectually and physically, that I have ever known, endowed with quite extraordinary intelligence and energy. This energy reached beyond the tasks of the common day compelling as these were, and was ever ready to grapple with the adventure of larger educational advantages for herself and her children, or turn to some device for facilitating the work of the laundry, to a better balanced ration for the table, or to new methods in the management of our well-conducted farm. Her own education had been good, and, although the burdens of her busy life compelled her to part company with French and music, she not only retained but widely enlarged her acquaintance with much that was best in English prose literature. For poetry she had little special taste, although she used to persuade my father to read a good deal of verse aloud and found a natural enjoyment in it; but for history she had almost a

passion and I have never met a person outside of professional circles who was so well versed as she in some phases of English and French history. Her taste in fiction was sound and her appetite for the best of it unlimited; so that the books in popular history from Prescott, Macaulay, and Motley to John Fiske, and the volumes of substantial fiction by Scott, Dickens, Victor Hugo, and Cooper that were read by that hospitable farmhouse fire as winter followed winter would have made a considerable and on the whole a well-selected library. Sometimes the reading fell to a lower level, for it was in the heyday of E. P. Roe's popularity, and my mother had a liking, too, for historical stories of the Mülbach and 'Schönberg-Cotta Family' type; and in the latter case there is still a good deal to be said for her judgment.

The reader may ask how, in so busy a life, time was found for this reading; and the answer is that it wasn't. It was vicariously supplied by my father who had a voice of excellent quality and was content to read by the hour in the evenings while my grandmother knit and my mother plied her needle. He may also wonder what had become of the reputed hostility of the Puritans to all works of fiction. I can only answer that I do not know. Certainly there was no trace of it in our household or in any Congregational household that I ever knew where there existed any literary interest at all. There were, however, bounds and limits to this freedom. The yellow-covered 'dime novel' of the day was quite taboo. I once brought one home from school, hid it

in a trunk after glancing at the first lurid pages, and soon afterward told my mother. She emphasized the fact that this sort of stuff must not be read, but did not confiscate the book, although she may have asked to see it, and there it lay for years until my interest had waned as my mother had confidently predicted that it would do. To the improbable adventures of Captain Mayne Reid and 'Oliver Optic' a somewhat different attitude was taken. They were held to be unworthy, but not harmful except in an overdose. These, too, I was expected to outgrow, and as an aid to such development, I must intersperse every one or two stories — exactly how much allowance was made for the weakness of the flesh has been forgotten — with a volume of Washington Irving. This was really a master-stroke, for I had been early fascinated by my father's reading aloud of Irving's 'Conquest of Granada' and so was led a willing captive to the 'Alhambra,' the 'Columbus,' and the 'Mahomet.'

But, great as was her interest in the events of the day, in history, and in literature, her concern with religion transcended them all. It had been her lot to bear a large family of children, sound in body and with at least average mental powers. She felt that she must account to God for their souls; and this task she undertook with an earnestness that almost frightened me. It was not that she said or did anything extreme. It was rather the perfectly natural and I think often quite unconscious passion that she showed, manifest in the tones of her voice as she spoke about sacred things or on the somewhat rare

occasions when she prayed with me. There was something half terrible in it to a growing boy, who not only loved reserve in general, but was particularly fearful of finding his own reserve pierced or broken down. Yet the effect was inevitable and permanent. One might be never so unwilling to agree with all that she said or thought, but there was no possibility of doubting the reality of her own conviction and devotion. Her dearest hope was to see her children grow up into believing and confessing men and women. Nothing else that life could offer was to be compared in value with a vital faith in Jesus Christ translated into practical goodness. She did not say much about Heaven and Hell, so far as I remember; but she said much about 'loving Jesus,' and when she spoke like that I always knew that she meant a love that was more than a feeling — if one had it one must do something about it, and it might have to be something drastic and possibly revolutionary. Half-mystical though her language might be there was no escaping the urge of her tremendous practical faculty. She had little of Saint Theresa's mystic gift for dreaming dreams and seeing visions; but she had her passion for religion and her insistence upon its immediate relation to life; and the nine of her ten children who grew to maturity all felt its impress.

Lest I should seem to be picturing paragons instead of people, it is needful to add that my mother, while by no means without humor, had no very large stock of it, and used whimsically to complain that her matter-of-factness was the butt of her hus-

band and children; which was true to this extent that she had to stand a good deal of affectionate banter from all of us. Imagination of a practical sort she had in high degree, but little of that fancy which represents the play of the mind. She was very tolerant of us and of our hastily formed judgments, assuring both us and herself that time and good training would set us straight; but she could not always suffer fools gladly outside her own family circle, and her estimates of those who in her view set common sense at nought were sometimes a little sudden and contemptuous. Indeed, it was this swiftness to see and speak which led to a certain deficiency of poise in my mother's admirable character and gave, not only to her, but sometimes to others, occasional unhappy moments.

It was a day of good omen when she married my father, for a man of better balanced mind I have never known. Ten years older than his wife, quiet, modest, contemplative, used to looking at both sides of every question before trusting himself to speak, and then studiously moderate in expression, he was exactly fitted to appreciate and supplement her eager and adventurous nature. They taught each other much and together were like a university to their children. Quite as energetic as my mother along his customary lines of endeavor, he was less adventurous or outreaching. There were few better or more intelligent farmers in his region, and it was like his even-handedness to be a particularly good sower of grain. This task he would sometimes undertake for a neighbor, not only because he was a

neighborly man, but because he loved to see the grain come up so well distributed that each shoot might have its chance, and because even his modesty was forced to admit that here he was an adept. A close observer, he became a mine of information not only with respect to farm processes, but in regard to the habits of the common beasts and birds, and the panorama of wind, weather, land, sea, sky, and season amid which he did his work. As valiant a campaigner against hostile circumstance as his wife, he was a less resourceful strategist, and would sometimes submit to a siege, undergoing a good deal of depression in the process, when she would have devised a flank movement or organized a sortie and put the enemy to the sword.

He had something of the taste for the poetic and imaginative which my mother lacked, and among my earliest memories are those of the simpler poems of Wordsworth and Southey which he repeated to me until I knew them as well as he. He was not widely read in these authors, but the selections from them in the 'National Preceptor,' a reading-book popular in the academies of his day, had fixed themselves in his retentive mind to my great advantage. He was fond, too, of the blank verse of N. P. Willis, and I can still hear him repeating

> 'The waters slept. Night's silvery veil hung low
> On Jordan's bosom . . .'

from 'David's Lament over Absalom.' Lest this should seem to argue a slight turgidity of taste on his part, I hasten to add that in his own use of language he had an unusual gift for lucid and simple state-

ment. Quite capable of dropping into the vernacular in ordinary talk with his men, the moment he came to deal with any serious topic, especially if this were in town-meeting, or in some informal service of religion, he had recourse to a vocabulary and style that were my delight, so clear, dignified, and forthright were they. There was no beating about the bush; no trace of fustian; nor any dallying with mere words after the thing itself had been said; and the words that were used seemed to reflect the influence of Scripture and the elder English essayists rather than the talk of the street — a limpid medium for the revelation of a singularly clear mind. His education had been that of our country schools supplemented by the local 'Academy' and a fair amount of good reading; and it was further helped out after marriage by his wife's influence and the annual reading-course by the fireside.

For over forty years this man was a deacon in the Church to which he and his forefathers had belonged, and I emphasize this fact because the holders of his office have acquired a place of their own in the literature of New England. They are commonly represented as narrow and unlovely; stubborn about things in general, but particularly set in their opposition to all progress, and a chief obstacle to their ministers when the latter would interpret the real grace of faith into terms of life. If offenders are to be dealt with, it is the deacon who would apply the full rigor of the law; and in business affairs, if honesty be allowed him at all, it is the formal honesty of a Shylock who would exact the extreme penalty of

any legal bond, let it bear never so hard upon others. And when this man is out upon his just occasions, his going forth is apt to be with a countenance so sour that religion is prejudiced in all ingenuous minds.

As one who differs widely from the doctrine accepted by many of these men and who appreciates their frequent limitations, I would bear witness to the libellous nature of such caricature. It has become one of those conventions of literature which are maintained year after year by writers who are either too ignorant, indolent, or hostile to free themselves. These church officers usually represented the best material at hand in their several communities. They were generally well known to their ministers and fellow church members; and moreover, the office was one which few men sought and from which many of the best men shrank. Now and then an arbitrary and dictatorial person would find his way into office; on very rare occasions a man of unworthy character might be chosen; but in the great majority of cases the free suffrages of a congregation would elect worthy representatives for the conduct of its religious and benevolent work.

I have small concern and less need to justify my father here. Yet there is one particular upon which a word needs to be said. He was as free from taint of affectation as any man could be; he could not put on a solemnity he did not feel or pretend to an earnestness and zeal that were not really his; and in point of fact it was the note of quiet reserve in him that often won upon me more than the zeal of others. But his

was a reverent nature. Late in life he went with me once to Washington and I was impressed by the quietness that marked his visits to Mount Vernon and the Capitol. At last, as though fearing lest he should seem inappreciative (for he was my guest), he told me that he could never talk much when visiting places where great men had wrought and history been made; he wished rather 'to be still and look and think.' The majesty of Isaiah's rhythmic prose, the presence of men whom he deemed great in respect of character or learning, a solemn music, or the worship of Almighty God — such things as these moved him profoundly and he showed at once his respect for them and for himself by a grave and becoming demeanor when engaged in any service of which they formed a part. Those who saw him then and only then might have thought him a grave and solemn man; and it was once told amid the ironic jeers and laughter of his children how some one had asked if he were not a severe man in his family.

In point of fact I have never known a serious-minded man who had so great a store of delicious nonsense at his disposal as my father. He had a singularly whimsical and playful mind and at his best was one of the happiest table companions in the world. The stranger would probably see little of this unless he inferred its existence from my father's readiness in that game of sober repartee which was so marked a feature in the intercourse of the older rural New England. But with his boys and girls the flood-gates of both physical and verbal play were opened. So exuberant was much of this mirth that

at bedtime little children had sometimes to be haled away by violence lest such ecstatic fun should murder sleep. He had, too, an excellent gift at answering a child's insistent questions after a fashion that mingled absurdity with fact. Illustration of random talk with children is, of course, perilous business, but I may perhaps cite his answer to a question as to whether porpoises, which were common off our coast, did any harm. My father's instant reply was that he had never heard of their robbing orchards. This not only satisfied an inquiring mind as to the general good character of the porpoise, but left the child's fancy to paint a delectable picture in which that sleek 'burgomaster of the sea' might have been caught (had his morals been less worthy) laboriously and sinfully swarming up a tree after apples.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of this quiet, humorous, reverent, affectionate, and enormously industrious man upon my mind and heart. He rarely spoke to me personally upon religious matters; and when he did it was with a modesty and a respect for my rights of opinion and judgment that deepened my sense of responsibility. I might feel that I ought to think or do as others said; I certainly wanted to be what my father was.

This was the home in which my formative years were passed and these the people by whom they were primarily influenced. By the simple standards of the day and of a rural New England community, we were accounted well-to-do and I was led to expect a college education in due time. In point of fact the

size of my father's family necessitated the most rigid economy and the best management of which he and my mother were capable; and this need was accentuated by the fact that the public schools in our village were then so poor as to compel them to seek private schools for their children. Had the family circumstances finally denied me college privileges the loss would have grieved my mother rather than me. I was devotedly attached to home and the countryside in which it stood. Books were dear and study was pleasant enough, but to be at their best both must be set in the frame of hill and plain, sea and shore that had compassed my forefathers' lives for two and a half centuries. The thought of going only two or three hours' journey from all this clouded portions of my childhood, and it used to be said that it was not until one of my uncles came from Yale to spend a week-end with my mother and casually told how his club ate waffles every Sunday morning that my eyes were really opened to the value of a higher education.

Before the time came to go, the early threat that I might become a mere bookworm had been dissipated by a growing fondness for shooting, fishing, and many of the farming tasks that had to be done in the woods or by the sea. Books had not lost their charm in any sense, but a naturally active habit was responding to the claims of sport and physical labor; and this I count to have been a great blessing as an aid to sanity and to a general sense of proportion in certain trying times that were to come. I can still remember my doubt on a dreary Saturday afternoon

whether to read another chapter of Boswell's Johnson to the charms of which my eyes were just opening, or go into the salt marshes in the hope of shooting a duck. The decision, which may have been made finally by the toss of a coin, led me to the sea, my duck fell in a channel between banks of ice whither I had to wade after it, and I came home in triumph, probably to read the chapter in Boswell after all.

It was a marvellously sound and wholesome life for a growing boy. Of course there were temptations. Companions were not lacking who were sexually curious if not lewd; but they were offset by others of sound moral quality, while the home influences held an admirably even way between coarseness and prudishness; the good sense and religious earnestness of my headmaster, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, won strongly upon me; and altogether I must have been sadly lacking in moral fibre had I not come through the period of adolescence with a growing respect for things that were pure, lovely, and of good report.

There were few better places in which to rear a boy in those days than one of the rural homes which maintained the old New England tradition of reverence, piety, and self-control, with a sense of life's responsibilities on the one hand, and of its incongruities, sometimes comic and sometimes tragic, on the other. I am the more inclined to emphasize this experience of my own boyhood because here again there has grown up a literary tradition that life in New England homes of a religious cast was hard and sour when not actually cruel; that inhibi-

tion rather than freedom was the order of its day, and that the rule for rearing children was only an amplification of the Victorian matron's direction to her nurse, 'to find out what John was doing and tell him to stop it.' This was neither my experience in my own home, nor did it accord with my observation of other homes into which I had glimpses when visiting my friends. Indeed, I should say that where harshness and jealousy of the just freedom of children did prevail, it was far more often in homes from which the light of religion had gone out than in those where it still burned. It is true that we had work to do, responsibilities to carry, and fairly strict limits to observe; but generally speaking there was no more of this restraint or compulsion than was needful to teach us self-control and to open windows upon the realities of life through which a glimpse might reach us of what was to be met when we should undertake its journey for ourselves. I am strengthened in this conviction by the highly competent testimony of Dr. W. J. Tucker whose boyhood antedated mine by about a score of years and who spent much of its formative period with his uncle and aunt in a New Hampshire parsonage.

Boyhood in New England before the arrival of the modern boy does not suffer by comparison with later conditions. . . . It was no easier then than now for a boy to endure the restraints necessary to right conduct. But the family training of that time did not stand primarily for repression. I should say that the prevailing note was freedom. . . . The restrictions put upon a boy were for the most part such as were shared by his elders, like certain

observances of Sunday. . . . The forms of religion were a part of the family routine, but its realities were no less a pervasive influence. . . . The home life of that period as I saw it had found the normal balance between authority and indulgence.[1]

[1] William Jewett Tucker: *My Generation*, pp. 28–30. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston and New York. 1919.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH, FAITH, AND DOUBT

This account of the setting of a boy's life and the religious influences that were brought to bear upon it would be incomplete without some definite reference to the Church of that day with its service and its teaching. Our church was not beautiful either within or without. It had been built a little too late to share in the distinction of design that has made some of the earlier Congregational churches of New England famous. Its predecessor of the eighteenth century had lasted into the middle decades of the nineteenth, and when the time came for change the older colonial tradition had passed. Yet, despite a forbidding plainness joined to some confusion of design, the main audience room was not ill-adapted to the simple service that it housed. The pulpit was at the end opposite the doors, the choir and organ in the gallery over the doors, and this was flanked by side galleries in which sundry boys and girls, with here and there a man, used to sit. Families rarely occupied these gallery seats. I liked them partly because the lofty perch spread a wider world before a boy's curious eyes, and partly because of the opportunity to read a book during sermon. This, to be sure, was likely to be observed by my father from his place in the choir gallery where he led the bass singers until my grandfather's death called him to

the head of the family pew; and I knew that he did not approve. If I were writing fiction instead of fact, the story would tell at this point of bitter rebukes and cruel punishment meted out to the juvenile sinner. But that was not my father's way. He expressed regret rather than indignation, and would occasionally remonstrate against an inattentive habit that leaned toward, if it did not touch, irreverence. But he issued no mandate, and I incurred no penalty beyond an occasional curtailment of gallery privileges.

Both prayer and sermon were too long, but neither reached any such preposterous length as the accepted literary tradition represents; and both were considerable means of education as well as of worship. The prayers of the more gifted ministers, while 'free' in the sense of being non-liturgical, were none the less dignified, solemnizing, and sometimes, in their adaptation of Scripture language to the day's need, memorably beautiful; while the sermons, though often formal and sometimes dull, were generally informing. I am not now disposed to appraise their doctrinal content. But their illustrations, drawn from the observation and reading of educated men, and their discussion of large religious and ethical themes, almost always gave the hearer something worth thinking upon, and in the long run were a distinct means of general culture to the congregation. Of course the sermon of fiction in such a church as this would generally deal with the golden streets of Heaven or preferably with the horrors of Hell. But we were not so other-worldly.

The preacher rarely dealt with Heaven and never with Hell; so that, after a score of years of attendance upon churches which stood in the Puritan succession, I could have said that I never heard a sermon upon Hell in my life. Doctrinal preaching was rare enough to excite remark; but if it were good doctrinal preaching, characterized by independent thought and expressed in language of the day, it was welcomed as this sort of preaching always seems to be. The sermons were generally written, and I am impelled to bear testimony to the fact that I learned more from those old-fashioned written and read sermons than I have ever been able to do from the heterogeneous patter of young ministers who are taught to despise writing and preaching from manuscript.

Then, too, there was the weekly prayer-meeting on Friday night and sometimes another on Sunday evening in a schoolhouse near our home. These services again have been the butt of considerable ridicule or satire from so-called 'literary' people. One remembers the outstanding features always ascribed to Puritan worship: the preternaturally solemn demeanor of the elders, the nasal drawl of speech and song, the stilted phrases, the bitterness of reference to those who differed in creed or form of worship, the general air of unreality if not of downright hypocrisy (if indeed hypocrisy may ever be called downright). This does not at all accord with my memories of these services. They were sometimes too long, the singing was often, though by no means always, poor; the remarks and prayers of the

participants were not infrequently a little commonplace and jejune. But the thing was no mockery. The note of sincerity was in it. If it lacked the flush of strong feeling, it was at least illumined by the healthy glow of duty. And there was often a really fine poetic quality in the speech and prayer of these plain people who had turned aside from the common task to think of divine things in order to do the task the better when they went back to it. There was much of worship in the prayers as the creature acknowledged the presence of the Creator; there was a mingling of humility and dignity in the confession of sin and the asking of pardon; there was often a moving setting forth in scriptural language of man's lot as the Pilgrim of the Universe, always seeking new adventure and a better home, 'having here no continuing city or abiding-place,' but looking for 'a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'

Like all meetings these had their bugbears. There was now and then some one who spoke to hear himself talk, and there was one glib brother in particular from quite outside our congregation who came in at rare intervals to speak feelingly of things with which his daily walk and conversation did not always agree, and I remember that my father pointed this out in a quiet way to me. Much more memorable and closely in accord with the purpose of these services was the brief speaking of an old and humble man who could say little that was significant and yet whose attempt to say anything at all was significant to me; and my father used to tell me of another who

stammered so dreadfully that panic seized the hearts of those who for the first time saw him rise to pray. Yet, after a single moment in which to compose himself, this man proceeded with simplicity and perfect dignity to present his needs and those of his neighbors to Heaven, lacking not a syllable of those which came with such painful effort when he discoursed of the common things of earth; and it was an interesting psychological fact that he could always do this. Impossible as it would be for me to subscribe now to some of the doctrine or to use some of the forms of expression that gave tone to these services, I would testify to their value and their beauty as voicing the aspirations and hopes of the believers who took part in them. I do not hesitate to speak of their beauty because so much of the unwritten liturgy used was poetic. Sometimes this poetry might be merely quaint or grandiose as when men spoke of 'the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler'; but more often it reflected the language of the more eloquent and appealing Scriptures, like the Second Isaiah and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

As our ministers we had a succession of men worthy of all respect; but the man who, perhaps, influenced me most profoundly was one for whom I had the least personal liking. He came from another communion — the Dutch Reformed — and was a scholar and a gentleman. A man of some independent means, he had an admirable library by which I profited, and he won acceptance if not fame as an essayist. He was, moreover, an excellent preacher so long as he used manuscript, and certain of his

illustrations remain with me to-day. But he was a man of sedentary habit who lacked all trace of contact with the outdoor world which meant so much to me; and, though distinctly intellectual in many of his interests, he was more emotional and heart-searching in his treatment of religion than suited either my taste or my comfort. I was at once interested by him and soundly afraid of him, and used to wonder how my mother could welcome his coming or my grandmother receive him as unconcernedly as she might any other guest. Did they not realize that this man was quite capable of asking after their souls, and must not such a question shatter the foundations of their peace? I think that in those days 'salvation' meant to me the release from fear of religion quite as much as deliverance from sin or punishment.

Yet this man was an organizer of victory. He had his way with me despite my feeling toward him, and it was a notable day in my small life when, without consulting any one about it, I stopped one afternoon on my way from school to tell him of my desire to be admitted to church membership. Probably no resolve ever cost me so much effort as this made after long and too anxious deliberation in my fourteenth year. My knowledge was not great and my experience was small. There was very little consciousness of 'loving Jesus' — indeed, the phrase was distinctly distasteful to me as were all words that seemed to charge religion with much sentiment — but I had a certain sense of loneliness outside the Church to which my elders belonged and with it some feeling of

peril if I neglected my soul's salvation; and next to speaking the truth and doing right in general, 'joining the Church' was about the only specific thing related to my soul's salvation that lay within reach.

The reader may naturally inquire how much I knew about doctrine or the creeds of the Church. If he is an instructed reader he will know that the New England churches which have maintained the Puritan tradition have never laid primary stress upon creeds or the exact belief of private members, in spite of the general notion to the contrary. Applicants were admitted in the old days upon a statement of their experience and belief as made by themselves (usually, to be sure, with the aid of the minister) and then by assent to a 'covenant' setting forth their purpose to lead righteous and godly lives. Creeds found their way into church manuals, indeed, as the result of various controversies, most notably that which gave rise to the 'Unitarian schism' of the early nineteenth century, but they rarely bore hardly upon the individual applicant for church membership; and toward the end of the century these were greatly simplified or even in some cases given up altogether as tests, being retained, if kept at all, as historical records of the Church's experience. Emphasis then went once more to the covenant or agreement to live and work together as Christians should.

I was kindly questioned by the proper church authorities; admitted my experience to be limited and my motive in coming to be caution quite as much as love; and was duly approved.

This was a step taken with entire sincerity and conviction, young as I was; and I still think that it was rightly done, because, as I conceived the matter, it was a business of *belonging* rather than of believing; I was joining a family rather than defining a faith. This brought me a considerable degree of assurance and peace; yet not quite the measure which I desired, because I no sooner found myself in the membership of the Church than it appeared that a great deal was expected of such people. Apparently the progress of the religion of Jesus Christ in the world depended primarily upon such propaganda as they could organize and maintain. This meant me and involved a good many things that I shrank from, not only because of my youth and inexperience, but because they were in themselves distasteful. Particularly was this true of anything that might involve a display of feeling on my part or an appeal to the feelings of others. I remember thinking that if conscience ever compelled me to be a minister I could at least become a foreign missionary and labor among strangers; or find some remote and quiet parish in the country where work would go on year after year in steady and humdrum fashion, as far away as possible from 'evangelists' and all their works, so dreadful to my boyish taste was the 'pleading' with people to be saved and the use of language which involved such words as 'tender,' 'dear,' 'loving,' and 'sweet.' I almost envied the folk of the Old Testament with their way so clearly defined for them through sacrifice and ceremonial to peace. The so-called New England conscience was

mine, and it gave me not only some bad half-hours, but some troubled weeks and months during the years of adolescence, dealing, as it has been wont to deal, quite as often with things that ought to be done as with things that had been done amiss. Of most of these struggles I said nothing to anybody nor do I propose to exploit them here. They had great significance for me even though they almost wore me out; and they gave me an insight into the sorrows and burdens of childhood and youth that has stood me in good stead ever since.

When about eighteen I went to Yale and found at once upon entering college a distinct refreshment and reinforcement of religious life. Here were men, not merely one or two, but a large group, some of them prominent in athletics and college society, who cared about religion, who were willing to discuss religious questions in a perfectly natural way, and who used to gather for religious purposes. Much of this conference and comment was doubtless immature enough, but it was frank, happy, and sincere. We learned a good deal that was to serve us later on.

The thing that gradually impressed me, however, especially as I came to read biography more widely and found how large a place religious doubt had played in many lives, was that I found so little trace of it among these men and was so little disturbed by it myself. Of course there were occasional scoffers and skeptics, but these appeared generally to be of the sophomoric sort who found a sort of distinction in decrying what others reverenced. Few seemed to be deeply concerned about the

foundations of their faith. Questions arose, of course, but our *apologia*, crude as it may have been, appeared to be amply qualified to deal with them. We rested mainly on the Bible, and upon the whole our interpretation of it was generous and reasonable. I still remember the general indignation among us when a well-known evangelist, himself one of the most admirable of men, undertook to argue the historicity of Jonah and the actuality of the 'great fish' from the casual reference which Jesus makes to the book. We were intelligent if not experienced enough to realize that this sort of apologetic was likely to raise more questions than it settled.

College over, I taught for some two years in an excellent preparatory school for boys, learning in the process from the headmaster, I have sometimes thought, as much as I could have taught my pupils. It was not congenial work, nor has school or anything connected with it ever been congenial. I liked books and study, got on well with teachers and fellow pupils, though not what is called a very good 'mixer,' and never really an adept in the school sports; but the confinement, the discipline, the frequent irksomeness of the teacher-pupil nexus, wore upon me and I longed for freedom; so that to this day one of the joys of early autumn, albeit an ungodly joy, is to take a walk in the woods or to go a-fishing at an hour when I know that all the boys and girls of my acquaintance have gone back to the imprisonment of school.

It was while teaching that I read for the first time Mommsen's 'Roman History.' My old headmaster

had, to be sure, introduced me to it in my small boyhood, but I had never undertaken its consecutive reading until this time; and I was struck by the fact that the historian was dealing in quite modern fashion with the New Testament period. Those decades which covered the lives of Jesus and the Apostles with the founding of the Christian Church had hitherto seemed like a unique section of time. Though suns rose and set and men and women married and were given in marriage, still those days seemed not quite like their fellows. A special sanctity belonged to them and it was hard to think that the men who saw their light did not perceive in it some peculiar radiance. Yet here was an historian of authority setting forth their persons and their politics as though these were of yesterday. There was no gleam of celestial light upon any page of his fascinating story, nor a suggestion that the world was passing through any crisis greater than that involved in the organization of the empire. I did not then attach great importance to the matter, but the impression made was more than a passing one, and I remembered it when the storm broke a year or two later as the sailor in a gale may call to mind the first weather-breeding signs of the sky which preceded it.

Time passed and I went back to the university for a professional course. What it was is scarcely essential to this narrative. Suffice it to say that, before my first year of professional study was over, I found myself face to face with the problem of whether I had or was likely again to have any religion that could properly be called Christian. I do

not hesitate to admit that this was a matter of great concern to me. Some have boasted that they scarce knew what freedom was until they had cast off the beliefs taught them in childhood. I was not of their company. My childhood had been wholesome and in most respects happy. My heart was deeply involved in all that home, with its places as well as its people, implied. Yet one of the first lessons taught me had been that there could be no wholeness and soundness in life except one not only spoke but lived the truth. This, I had been told, was Christian doctrine, and fundamental to any honest approach to or understanding of Christianity. If there were really no common ground upon which I could stand and work with Christians and in particular with those among whom I had been brought up, then the fact would have to be faced, even though it cost me as it did Romanes, 'the sharpest pang of which my nature was susceptible.' In those days it seemed as though everything might conceivably have to go into the melting-pot perhaps to be recast, possibly to be destroyed.

It was a difficult and very memorable time. The Bible, although I was by no means an accomplished Biblical student, had grown to be dear to me as the revered and trusted guide of those whom I revered and trusted; it had become, too, the foundation stone of my own rather informal system of belief. What authority could properly attach to it under the new conditions woven by historical research and enlarged experience colored somewhat by a changed philosophical outlook? The question of the existence

of God was less insistent because it seemed practically impossible to 'think Him away'; but the nature and work of Jesus Christ — his reality as an agent of revelation and an object of devotional faith — this was a subject of painful and critical doubt. Somewhat less importance seemed at that time to attach to what men called the 'Holy Spirit,' but this was rather because the thing seemed mystical and remote than because of any settled conviction. The existence and public service of the Church caused me little disturbance; indeed, I never ceased to be thankful for it, so clear had been its practical justification of itself in my own intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social experience. It seemed good that it should go on with its worship and its service of worthy causes, gathering to itself men who had escaped or overcome doubt as to the validity of its charter. But its creeds — ought one to wish them away as relics of bygone organisms whose skeletons now cumbered the paths of a generation born for larger development and higher experience; or should one regard them as necessary part and parcel of the Church's life, to be accepted by such as had the requisite appetite and digestion and sadly or contemptuously rejected by the rest? The Sacraments — had they, indeed, any efficacy that fitted them for continuance and the observance of thoughtful people, or were they, too, only relics of an elder and more superstitious day? What justification had the Christian ministry and the great adventure of Christian missions in a day when the material was so near and the practical so compelling? Many

found peace and comfort in this service and some rose to unquestioned influence that seemed beneficent; was there reality in this or only a seeming calculated to cloud clear thinking and deceive the unwary?

Such were some of the questions, easy to ask if not to answer now, whose mere asking clouded the sun in heaven in those transition days of the last quarter of last century. It would be far too much to expect that full and satisfying answers either positive or negative can be set down in the brief chapters that follow. The writer's aim will be to show how he has managed to live with them and to win all of them to neighborliness and some to friendship.

CHAPTER III

HAS RELIGION ANY REALITY?

To set down in exact order of time all the experience of doubt and faith that marked this transition stage would take too long. I shall attempt, therefore, a logical rather than a chronological order of statement, although in most cases the two will naturally coincide.

In looking back over the months in which doubt seemed determined to assault everything, I can see clearly now that some positions remained quite impregnable. Though religion might cease to be my personal possession, there was little question but that it would remain the possession of others, and of this I was glad. It had, to be sure, caused me some sorrow, but there was a haunting sense that this sorrow had been of a generative and fruitful sort and that its cure lay in more rather than less religion. There was little in all this on which to base a constructive argument; perhaps, indeed, there was nothing but an afterglow of the clear and unquestioning faith of childhood; and yet even this afterglow seemed capable of revelation. While it might not limn features, yet it revealed shapes that were no ghosts but substantial realities. At least I felt this, whether it were possible to prove it or not, and the feeling brought a certain comfort in its train.

But beyond this realm of shadow in which one felt all the more keenly, perhaps, because the material for building a well articulated argument was lacking, there was a brighter region where one saw things clearly. They were not numerous and they seemed to be rather elementary things; but they meant something; and they had an air of friendly authority as though both willing and able to guide one into a practicable way.

In those days on an expedition into the far Southwest I started to hunt one lowering afternoon among the intricate canyons of the Pecos Valley in Texas. My horse was my only companion. The day wore on with little to show for my labors. Rain was sifting down before a northeast wind and with it came a mist which obscured the landmarks of a region that at best was none too familiar. Gullies worn by old erosion wove a network about me, until by mid-afternoon I woke to the realization that I was lost. The canyon that was expected to lead me home proved upon entrance to be strange. There was nothing for it but to put my tired horse to its steep bank again and steer north by compass against the storm until finally I should clear that nest of defiles and perhaps intersect the old government trail to the fords of the Pecos. My horse clambered to the *mesa*, crossed a ridge or two, and, after a while, descended into another canyon. Little distinguished it from the one so lately left. There were the same steep, winding banks, the same scanty herbage, the same wilderness of scattered limestone, and the same obscurity of soaking mist and rain.

Then suddenly out of the fog loomed the shoulder of a great promontory. Too high and far to be clearly discerned, there was none the less a suggestion of friendliness in its rough outline. Moving toward it I soon discovered its neighbor upon the opposite side where the canyon debouched upon the plain. This, too, was but a mass of barren limestone. Yet every step gave greater assurance that I had seen them before, that together they would give me direction, and that if treated wisely they would guide me home. It proved to be so, and I have had many occasions since to bless the presence of some plain or even forbidding phenomenon, which, however dimly discerned, yet served to give life practicable bearings.

One such thing that helped me in the day of doubt was this persistence of Religion. However false its friends or numerous its enemies, there seemed to be no getting rid of it. Its Babel towers might be interrupted and discredited, its human sacrifices shock the truer instincts of men, Roman augurs might smile at one another in the street, and French Revolutionist or Russian Bolshevik decree its doom. The fact remained that the thing survived. Slain overnight it rose again in the morning. Out of the ashes of persecution it lifted itself as from a cleansing bath. The Phœnix was no mere legend. Human faith in a god or gods held out against every contradiction of time and chance.

The reader who is anxious to pick flaws in this statement of experience may interpose here with the remark that it proves too much. I should answer

that just now I am not trying to prove anything. The point is that the seeming fact of the persistence of Religion gave me, for better for worse, a sort of confidence that others at least would continue to enjoy the faith of which I might be deprived. To judge the future by the past, Religion was likely to persist despite my own possible defection or even the falling away of my generation. There was a kind of grim comfort in this. Doubt in itself never seemed very friendly. Negations usually lack the element of friendliness. If doubt could prove its claim, then I must pay the pound of flesh named in the bond even though it were next the heart; but I never was disposed to congratulate it upon its conquest or wish my friends to be its victims.

Then gradually the feeling grew up that there was a logical significance in this persistence of Religion. It was in the heyday of Herbert Spencer's influence and John Fiske was his American prophet. And did not Mr. Spencer say that 'the only ultimate test of reality is persistence, and the only measure of validity among our primary beliefs is the success with which they resist all efforts to change them'? [1] Now, while no one ought to claim that the Idea of God or any specific article of religious faith is immune from change, a man might very properly claim that some idea of a god and the possession of some articles of faith come pretty near to being 'primary beliefs' in Spencer's use of the term. Men may conceivably be found without them, just as many men may be found to question or deny as an

[1] John Fiske: *The Idea of God*, p. 139.

abstract proposition the essential reasonableness of the universe or the 'Uniformity of Nature'; and even more men may be found who have never formulated it to themselves at all. Yet, as these latter men will show a certain instinctive confidence in the dependableness of Nature when they make their plans for to-morrow, so the former will surprise their fellows and sometimes themselves by naïve admissions that they, too, feel the religious impulse. The confessed antagonist of Religion who began his speech with the words, 'Thank God, Gentlemen, I am an atheist,' would have said that he simply used a common locution of the street. This is true, but then it remains to ask how the street came to form the phrase and give it such currency. Phrases of this sort rise from experience; they are not deliberately fabricated. Even our very curses are prayers gone wrong and I have sometimes watched with a certain amusement the effect upon an habitually profane man of a remonstrance for praying so loud in public. Even upon entering the ways of unbelief, we cannot altogether rid ourselves of the heritage of faith; and where we seem to succeed, the thing against which we have just barred the door will sometimes surprise the window. Man remains incorrigible here, and I do not hesitate to admit the satisfaction that I found in this evident obstinacy of the religious instinct.

Of course, if one were to attempt the construction of an argument at this point, it would be necessary to admit that this instinct was often unregulated and that it was then capable of wild abuse. Without

the instructed coöperation of intellect and will the religious instinct might find its satisfactions in gross superstition instead of enlightened faith. So the instinct to dominate circumstance, when exercised without due consideration for others, may result in the direst tyranny; yet it remains one of the peculiar endowments of man and upon it his progress largely depends. The sexual instinct is fundamental to society; yet when uncontrolled it is capable of inflicting and daily inflicts some of the cruellest wounds from which society suffers. Superstition bears somewhat the same relation to religion that profanity does to prayer, testifying to its reality and fitness to meet men's need very much as the demoniacs in the time of Jesus were believed to have borne witness to his authority. It is unconscious or else unwilling testimony; but that type of testimony always carries weight, and in this case it has seemed to me to testify clearly to the inevitability of Religion, and therefore to its reality, since, if 'reality' mean anything, that which is inevitable must be real.

Then there came the testimony of the people among whom I had been reared, and here, as so often, implicit rather than explicit testimony carried the greater weight. What they said counted for much; but what they were was conclusive. They were not 'other-worldly' people. They were very much occupied and upon the whole very competent in their occupation with the things of this world. The stern necessities of every day demanded this. Carelessness, selfishness, mystical preoccupation, or any sitting down with folded hands to see the coming

of that Kingdom of God in which they believed, must have invited disaster to them and those they loved. The ties of kinship and neighborhood meant to them a responsibility of the most practical sort. Their self-respect must have suffered and their reputation for consistency have gone to pieces had they neglected these matters.

Yet such realities were not the ultimate things in their experience. The truths of Religion seemed after all to be the matrix into which the events of the common day were thrown and from which the larger experiences of life gained form, consistency, and color. The careless observer, especially if he were rhetorically inclined, might have been tempted to say that the things of earth 'paled into insignificance' in the light of Heaven. That would not have been true. The tasks of earth that lay in the line of duty, whether it were their duty or mine, never seemed to me to pale into insignificance in the light or dusk of anything. They held themselves and they held me to the day's work that fell to our lot as though this were the only condition on which manhood and a genuine, first-hand acquaintance with reality were to be had. But the light of their faith, or, if the reader please, 'the light of Heaven,' falling upon these things unquestionably illumined them and brought out aspects that must otherwise have been missed.

There was, for instance, very little repining at drudgery; and this attitude even went so far as to encourage in children the notion that almost everything worth doing involved a certain amount of

drudgery and that it was good policy to make its acquaintance in youth — a doctrine singularly out of harmony with much of the home and school practice of to-day. Play was good and opportunity for play was given, but daily tasks must be done at specified times. This was necessary for the good order of the household; it was only fair to those who were employed and whose freedom often depended upon our promptness; and it helped to twist the fibre of manhood and womanhood until it should come to possess both resilience and strength. I do not intend to imply that we greedily accepted this ideal and hastened to illustrate it. We were as headstrong and dilatory as children are wont to be. But we did not finally escape the influence of a precept laid upon us and illustrated to us, not as a ukase of mere arbitrary authority, but as a principle of life revealed when the light of Heaven shone on the tasks of earth.

Earth was a place of probation — a school for the development of such character as should discern between the true and the false, the temporal and the eternal, and having discerned, should choose the better. The Spirit of Christ would show the way and make it possible to travel it. But not unless a man were honest in the quest. Here the note of reality seemed very clear to me looking upon these people of Puritan descent and tradition. They were imperfect as I have said, and as they travelled this way of which they spoke, its dust stained them and their garments often enough. Sometimes they stumbled, and again pettiness or loss of patience would mar the day's progress; but I never doubted that they were

genuine pilgrims and that the quest was real. I was taught, for instance, that it was the intent to deceive and not the mere form of words into which the truth or untruth might be twisted which made a lie; and this truthfulness which they expected of me they evidently tried to show to me, though doubtless sorely put to it sometimes by my eager questions. This was a hard lesson for an imaginative child to learn. Once in a great while fear thrust him into either a misstatement or such economy of truth that the result was much the same; but the daily temptation was to clothe the figments of imagination in the dress of reality and, like the creatures of Uncle Remus, 'to talk biggotty.' This was generally recognized for what it was and treated with distinct yet tolerant disfavor until the lesson was learned. There was no mistake about the lesson itself, however. A lie was a lie, and the undiscovered lie that seemed to be successful was, if anything, more dangerous to the teller of it than the foolish untruth that was discerned and punished. The latter brought its present shame and sorrow which might have healing qualities; the former was a poison working under cover in which might be hid the seeds of death. So I was taught. But these commonplaces of parental instruction never sounded, then or later on, like platitudes, so deep they seemed to go into the convictions of those about me and so abundantly were they illustrated in their lives. My mother's evident desire to be as frank as she knew how with my questions about sex and the origins of life, while at the same time checking abnormal or unprofitable

curiosity; and my really wise father's simple admissions that he did not know, when I attempted to probe the mysteries of revelation or science, all had their effect. It became increasingly impossible to doubt that the religious impulse behind such teaching and example was a reality rather than a sham.

It was the same with reference to business dealings. Honesty, in the common formal acceptance of the word, was assumed as a matter of course. It was practically taken for granted that the opportunity to steal would present no temptation; and it might, I think, be safely said that after the irresponsible period of infant covetousness and brigandage had passed, the assumption was a safe one. But it soon appeared that this was but the outward seeming of the law of *meum* and *tuum*, and that it behooved us to look deeper. Honesty was the best policy, to be sure, but the Christian man was not primarily on the lookout for policies. It was his business to discover and possess principles. These rather than policies were the true link between belief and conduct; and one of the first principles for a good man's guidance in business was that of honor. The word itself was rarely used, nor was much time spent in formally defining the thing. In fact, I can scarcely remember any very formal instruction upon these matters with the exception of one debate to which I shall presently refer. Such teaching as was imparted — and it was definite as well as lasting — was implicit in the attitude and practice of my elders. The Yankee has been credited with a peculiar gift for sharp bargains, and my people were Yankees of the deepest dye.

But the sharp bargain never received any meed of admiration in that home. If it won a smile for its cleverness, it was a wry smile that showed to an observant child a highly questionable element somewhere in the transaction. Nor was the sly effort to get the better of a bargain often, if ever, made the subject of joke or story unless it were patently absurd like my father's extravagant tale of the man who bought a bushel of shoe pegs and, finding them worthless, laboriously sharpened the blunt end of each and finally sold them for oats; or unless it showed the would-be biter as finally bit. It is a rather significant comment upon the attitude of my elders in these matters that all the stories that I can recall relating to the early attempts of unscrupulous white men to gain an unfair advantage of the Indians were of this latter nature. A farmer for instance, offers to sell an Indian as much cider as his basket will hold, and accepts payment for it; whereupon the Indian, it being winter weather, takes his basket to the brook, dips it a few times in the cold water, exposes it as often to the colder air, and soon returns with a perfectly tight receptacle. There was, I am sure, no premeditation in this choice of stories, and I am by no means prepared to say that none of a different type was told, but this is the type that has kept its hold on memory. Good measure, full weight, truly coöperative business dealing that made for the advantage of both sides — these were the things that seemed to command appreciation and esteem; and without anything being said about it these were the things that I soon perceived to be the practical

ideals at which my elders and many of their neighbors aimed. I was told that they went with religion and I saw them evidently going with religion as though the two belonged together. Occasionally my attention was called to an attempt to yoke very different practical ideals with religion, and I was struck by the evident fact that they did not belong and could not work together; and again the reality of the sort of religion which I had so far experienced in life was brought home to me.

It would be a mistake to suppose that all the views of my elders were accepted without any question on my part. I still remember a discussion of gambling or betting. My rather impulsive mother was inclined to characterize it as stealing; but to this I demurred on the ground that what one might gain in this way was won with the knowledge and at least formal consent of the loser; and that it could not therefore properly be called stealing. This was admitted, but it was urged that this sort of gain at the expense of another's loss did not agree with the sense of honor that should characterize a Christian, that it often bred a diseased and eager appetite, and not infrequently encouraged sharp practice if not downright foul play. To take the goods of another with no giving or attempting to give a fair return did not accord with true manhood. I am not trying to reproduce the words of my parents, but rather the remembered substance of their teaching as it reached me from their lips and was reinforced by their lives.

So telling was this influence that there was some danger that I might become a mere precisian, and at

one period of my life, as though in reaction from the time when truth was treated rather cavalierly by an active and irresponsible imagination, I became so exceeding anxious to be exact as to be always qualifying my statements and promises. This resulted in an indefiniteness that used to vex my father; but here my mother, who may have had a like experience, came to the rescue. She saw in this case where the trouble lay because her own very literal and matter-of-fact habit inclined her at times to the limitations which the precisian must observe. But my father was very free from all such over-anxiety and taught me at least in some measure the freedom as well as the obligation of the law.

The Religion that I saw about me had one or two further notes of vital reality which must at least be briefly mentioned. One was its gift for correcting its own errors from within. The old New England Calvinism had, of course, pretty much passed away from the churches of our order before my day. But those who know its history best realize that it was never so hard-and-fast a thing as is commonly supposed. Jonathan Edwards himself was one of the most ardent as well as brilliant of reformers; and practically every generation since has seen a recasting of the substance of the faith of the fathers into the forms of that day's thought and experience. A near connection of my father had been a close friend of Horace Bushnell, at once the most orthodox and eloquent of heretics, who had modified the thinking of a whole section of the Church upon some of the greatest themes. This thing was constantly going on.

The wiser folk about me seemed to expect that it would go on. Though naturally conservative of the substance of past experience, they never seemed to expect to-morrow exactly to duplicate to-day. 'Trees grow best in soil fertilized by their own leaves' might have served as their motto. Their religion was not a thing to be violently pulled up by the roots and set out anew every season; but it was a vital thing that adapted itself to new conditions, outgrew old limitations, and profited by its own past both of mistake and conquest. This seemed to indicate, not only reality, but a sort of hopeful power.

Then, too, there was the ability of Religion to relate the great and the small, the august and the petty in such a way as to enhance the apparent worth of both. Jesus had illustrated this in assuring his disciples that not a sparrow fell to the ground without their Father's care — a thought which at once dignified the creature and beatified the Creator. All about I observed a similar process going on. Nothing was quite common or unclean that could be lifted into Religion's light. And often the effort to relate the two resulted in quite memorable sayings. I can best illustrate my meaning by quoting a sentence or two from a highly cultivated but very retiring and whimsical New England country preacher who became my friend.

> Mahogany takes finer polish than pine, but that doesn't discredit pine. Seest thou one that is basswoody? Know then that if the Lord made him so, he is made for a purpose and ought to fit somewhere excellently well. . . .

There is no sense in poking at the mirror as though it were merely the device of feminine vanity. Everyone must come to it to know if he is presentable. It serves to put a finer face on humanity. It deserves respect for telling the truth. Yea, what is this Bible mirror for if not to dress by? . . .

Why can you not pocket the advantage when the conductor forgets your ticket? Because of a heavenly vision that paints honour in more radiant colours than profit, and holds the least item in each day's duty sacred as it were the jewel of an angel's crown.

Religion had the gift which this minister of religion illustrated, of relating the great and the small so that the latter took on significance while the former was in no way belittled. Here again a note of reality seemed to be sounded, since the minutiæ of life unquestionably need to be linked and coördinated with its larger interests if men are not to be swamped in the sordid. Now the attempt to dignify the little is perhaps the most crucial test to which seeming greatness can be put. Yet any one who has known with intimacy the lives of a considerable number of humble and faithful Christian people must admit that genuine religious faith meets this test. Reaching to the highest without pride, it seemed to touch the lowest without condescension. The more I saw of Christian 'truth' wrought over into goodness in the lives of plain people, the more certain I felt that they had found something that really dignified them. They might be poor, but poverty did not belittle them; or unsuccessful, yet not therefore insignificant; and they were bound to die, only, oftentimes, to leave their deeper influence more vital than ever.

This did not seem like the result of chance. The things occurred too often and too regularly to be other than causal in their connection. To be sure, this faith that gave them dignity and power might not be for me; but I found myself glad that they had it and that, since it could produce such results, it was at work in some form in the world.

Here, then, were some of the reasons why Religion seemed to be a phenomenon worth further study and likely to prove a reality rather than a sham.

It had endured, and, despite some bitter enemies and perhaps as many foolish friends, it seemed likely to endure.

It seemed to correspond to an instinctive appetite in man, that, to be sure, might be starved or distorted into strangely diseased shapes, but which still cried out to be fed, developed, and rationally trained.

Within the sphere of my own observation it had seemed to develop very practical results in the lives of people whom I knew well and whom I saw in private as well as in public.

And these results had generally made for the dignifying of life, the increase of its usefulness, and the enhancement of its lasting values.

It did not seem unreasonable that a man should be glad that such results should continue in the experience of others even though denied to him; or that he should feel that somewhere in this mass of human experience there were things certainly worth his study and possibly worth his acceptance.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEA OF GOD

Not very long since there appeared in the early pages of a popular and humorous weekly the picture — not too well drawn — of a mighty canyon with scarp and counterscarp of weathered rock. Beyond its rim might be seen a wilderness of peaks. Through its floor flowed a river with space enough to display the beauties of broad reaches and occasional lagoons. The foreground was so arranged that the reader seemed to be looking out from a huge cavern, not dark and gloomy, but picturesque rather, and even cheerful with its fringe of dwarf pines defining and softening the outline of overhanging rocks. The whole landscape was flooded with sunlight — drenched in it, as the novelists like to say — which glorified its rugged features and threw into especially high relief a great tongue of rock that thrust itself out from the canyon wall immediately before the cave's mouth. It thus occupied the central foreground and on it was perched the figure of a man rather jauntily attired and in the attitude of a public lecturer. Dwarfed into physical insignificance by his stupendous surroundings, there was still no mistaking his nonchalant attitude as with outstretched hand he proclaimed to an unseen audience within the cave, 'There is no God.'

The picture and the artist's evident design to hold unbelief up to a gentle ridicule furnished an inter-

esting comment upon one of the oldest and most generally used of arguments for the existence of God. It would be unsafe to claim that it is as old as the idea of a god; but it undoubtedly dates back to the early twilight of reasoned thought about a god who might be distinguished from the casual spirits attached to trees, mountains, or other natural objects. As soon as men began really to collect their impressions and so to order their reasoning upon them as to put questions to the world and to each other, this question concerning a creator, sustainer, and adequate cause must have thrust itself into the foreground. The reader of John Fiske will remember his quotation of the primitive Kaffir's confession.

'Twelve years ago,' said this man, Sekese, to the French traveller, M. Arbrousseille, 'I went to feed my flocks; the weather was hazy. I sat down upon a rock and asked myself sorrowful questions; yes, sorrowful, because I was unable to answer them. Who has touched the stars with his hands — on what pillars do they rest, I asked myself. The waters never weary, they know no other law than to flow without ceasing from morning to night, and from night till morning; but where do they stop, and who makes them flow thus? The clouds also come and go, and burst in water over the earth. Whence come they — who sends them? The diviners certainly do not give us rain; for how could they do it? and why do not I see them with my own eyes when they go up to heaven to fetch it? I cannot see the wind; but what is it? who brings it, makes it blow and roar and terrify us? Do I know how the corn sprouts? Yesterday there was not a blade in my field, today I returned to the field and found some; who can have given to the earth the wisdom and power to produce it? Then I buried my face in both my hands.' [1]

[1] Fiske: *Idea of God*, pp. 168–69.

All this is, of course, very naïvely put, though it is moving and appealing like so much else that is naïve. It depicts an attitude that persists. Some men answer these questions crudely and cleverer men in a later generation hold up the crudity to ridicule, fancying, perhaps, that they have thus disposed of the whole matter. But it will not do. As in the case of religion in general so with this specific question about an adequate cause, the thing is no sooner decently interred than it rises again to challenge the thought of man. The Idea of God persists. In saying this and in recalling days of doubt when one wondered whether there would ever again be any peaceable living with the fundamental theses of Religion, I am disposed to look for my witnesses to men who have been reckoned, at least in their own day, as heretics.

The most casual reader of the current literature of the eighth and ninth decades of last century will notice how general seemed to be the notion that the Darwinian theories had done irreparable if not fatal injury to the Idea of God and to the argument for his existence from the appearance of design in the universe. Archdeacon Paley had pictured a watch lying upon the seashore, picked up by a passer-by and bearing irrefutable testimony to the presence in the vicinity somewhere and at some time of human intelligence. Such intricate and purposeful machines simply do not 'happen.' They are planned and built. So, ran the argument, design appears in all the intricate adjustments and interrelations of the material universe. Wherever there is adaptation to

service, there the hand of the Great Artificer appears. If a watch keep time, some active and guiding intelligence must have marked out its dial and hitched its delicate wheels to the stars. If my thumb prove so handily opposed to my four fingers that the member which it thus helps to form becomes the most indispensable and adaptable of tools, God must have planned it so. It could not have 'happened.'

But how if it were caught in the act of happening? This was the question that the Darwinian evolutionists put to the world of 1870 and 1880 and with telling effect. This hand and a multitude of other members, that seemed particularly designed, as they were certainly peculiarly adapted, for special service, were traced in their processes of gradual development. They could no longer be thought of as having been fabricated or even born. They grew; and the growth seemed rather the outworking of an inner experience than the fulfilment of a preconceived plan. Paley and his watch were hastily consigned to the rubbish-heap, not without some undeserved contumely, and the world began to resign itself to a general surrender of the idea of purpose or design in its constitution. Then, curiously enough, questions began to be asked in the very strongholds of the new ideas that countered upon this surrender. In 1878, Charles Darwin wrote to his friend Romanes, who had recently written a book which seemed to seal the tomb of this dead idea beyond hope of resurrection:

I should like some time to hear . . . what you would say if a theologian addressed you as follows: 'I grant you the

attraction of gravitation, persistence of force (or conservation of energy), and one kind of matter, though the latter is an immense admission; but I maintain that God must have given such attributes to this force, independently of its persistence, that under certain conditions it develops or changes into light, heat, electricity, galvanism, perhaps even life. . . . Again I maintain that matter, though it may in the future be eternal, was created by God with the most marvellous affinities. . . . If you say that nebulous matter existed aboriginally and from eternity with all its present complex powers in a potential state, you seem to me to beg the whole question.'

Please observe that it is not I, but a theologian who has thus addressed you, but I could not answer him.[1]

Contemporary with Romanes and younger than Darwin was Samual Butler, grandson, namesake, and biographer of the famous Headmaster of Shrewsbury School, and Bishop of Lichfield. Butler according to his own testimony was a 'free-thinker' as that word is commonly misused; that is, he rejected Christianity as he understood it, and was contemptuous if not bitter toward the Church; and, although in many of the relations of life a warm-hearted and brotherly man, he has left us in his novel, 'The Way of All Flesh,' which reflects the life of his own childhood's home, perhaps the ablest illustration in literature of how a man may dishonor father and mother and generally befoul the nest in which he was nurtured.[2] He differed widely

[1] *Life and Letters of J. G. Romanes,* pp. 88–89.

[2] Heatherly, Butler's instructor in painting, criticized the book very frankly and justly when he told his pupil that he had taken all the tenderest feelings of our nature and, having spread them carefully over the floor, had stamped upon them till he had reduced them to an indistinguishable mass of filth and then handed them round for inspection.

and even bitterly from Darwin in regard to the theory of Natural Selection. It was therefore no predilection for orthodoxy that led him to write:

> The man of science begins with *tabulæ rasæ*, gropes his way to evolution, thence to purposive evolution, thence to the omnipresence of mind and design in the universe. What is this but God? The theologian begins with God and is driven to evolution. *Par divers moyens on arrive à pareille fin.*[1]

One further quotation may be permitted to complete the testimony of this perverse and fascinating witness even though it does not bear directly upon the point under discussion. In 1887, when he was fifty-one and the greater part of his work was accomplished, he wrote to a scientific friend,

> Do you — does any man of science — believe that the present orthodox faith can descend many generations longer without modification? Do I — does any freethinker who has the ordinary feelings of an Englishman — doubt that the main idea underlying and running through the ordinary orthodox faith is substantially sound?
>
> That there is an unseen life and unseen kingdom which is not of this world, and that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; that the life we live here is much, but, at the same time, small as compared with another larger life which we all share, though, while here, we can know little if anything about it; that there is an omnipresent Being into whose presence none can enter and from whose presence none can escape — an ineffable con-

'I did not take this view of the matter myself,' adds Butler, who, with a frankness that is as characteristic as it is sometimes engaging, has recorded the criticism. (H. F. Jones: *Samuel Butler: A Memoir*, I, 389–90.)

[1] H. F. Jones: *Samuel Butler: A Memoir*, I, 372.

tradiction in terms; . . . who that is in his senses can doubt these things? [1]

I shall venture to call one more witness at this point from the ranks of those who, in their own day at least, were reckoned to be heretics. Matthew Arnold's blithe and humorous dealing with great themes shocked a multitude of serious people; and it is to be admitted that, apostle of sweetness and light though he was, he could sometimes grievously offend in matters of good taste. Then, too, his early acceptance of the results of Biblical criticism seemed to many to align him with Religion's foes. It was the lot of a later day to discover how real and powerful a champion of essential faith he was to prove. He knew — no man better — what doubt meant; and it can well be imagined that there were times in his earlier experience of it when he questioned whether anything worth calling faith would be left to him or to the world. Yet when Professor Clifford, with all the prestige of his brilliant mathematical achievements, set his youthful lance in rest against Christianity as 'that awful plague which has destroyed two civilizations and has but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live amongst men,' it was Matthew Arnold who entered the lists in faith's behalf:

These are but the crackling fireworks of youthful paradox. One reads it all, half sighing, half smiling, as the declamation of a clever and confident youth, with the hopeless inexperience, irredeemable by any cleverness, of his age. Only when one is young and headstrong can one thus prefer bravado to experience, can one stand by the

[1] H. F. Jones: *Samuel Butler: A Memoir*, II, 53.

Sea of Time, and instead of listening to the solemn and rhythmical beat of its waves, choose to fill the air with one's own whoopings to start the echo. But the mass of plain people hear such talk with impatient indignation, and flock all the more eagerly to Messrs. Moody and Sankey. They feel that the brilliant free-thinker and revolutionist talks about their religion and yet is all abroad in it, does not know either that or the great facts of human life; and they go to those who know them better. And the plain people are not wrong. Compared with Professor Clifford, Messrs. Moody and Sankey are masters of the philosophy of history. Men are not mistaken in thinking that Christianity has done them good, in loving it, in wishing to listen to those who will talk to them about what they love, and will talk of it with admiration and gratitude, not contempt and hatred. Christianity is truly . . . 'the greatest and happiest stroke yet made for human perfection.' Men do not err, they are on firm ground of experience, when they say that they have practically found Christianity to be something incomparably beneficent.[1]

Now here is the testimony of three men of very remarkable powers. One was an epoch-maker in the history of human thought. The second was vastly his inferior in many of those qualities that go to make memorable character; but he had learning, ingenuity, candor, and more than a touch of that indefinable something that we call 'genius.' It was warped, to be sure, until the man's 'otherwise-mindedness' at times seemed to out-Ishmael Ishmael; and it was Butler's lot to play a part in the Darwinian drama comparable to that of the Adversary in Job. Arnold possessed a remarkably clear and well-balanced as well as highly cultivated

[1] *God and the Bible,* Preface.

mind. He was an admirable exemplar of the culture which has been happily defined as the 'exercise of balanced and regulated faculty.' Learned and tolerant, he not only had an extraordinary insight into the problems of his day but an equal gift for their statement in terms that combined clarity with charm. All these men knew what doubt was — far-reaching and fundamental doubt. Darwin put it by as beside the main purposes of life; Butler made considerable literary capital of it; while Arnold dealt with it after a fashion that seemed as revolutionary to many in his day as it has since proved to be constructive.

Yet all three acknowledge the power of what we may call the Idea of God. Darwin implies that he is quite unable to answer the questions of an inquiring theologian on any other ground; and it may be observed in passing that his correspondent Romanes became so convinced of the same difficulty that before his death he returned into full communion with the Christian Church. Butler, always critical and often grotesquely flippant, acknowledges 'the main idea underlying the orthodox faith to be essentially sound.' Arnold, true to his chief purpose of construction, not only admits the principal idea underlying Christianity to be sound, but boldly characterizes Christianity itself as the 'greatest and happiest stroke yet made for human perfection . . . something incomparably beneficent.' Of course so far as mere authority goes the testimony of such men as these might be worth no more than that of any three philosophers, theologians, or publicists of

eminence; but their voices sounded out of what seemed to be the 'enemy's camp'; they might be classed as unwilling witnesses; but whether so or not it was clear that while men thus situated, thus endowed and with such predilections as these three felt the haunting quality of the Idea of God and the existence of a substantial residue of truth in the Christian faith, my own faith was not to be too suddenly and cavalierly dismissed.

At the time of which I am writing I had not read or heard all the words just quoted; but had I done so they might have been taken over as my own. How could the extraordinarily intricate processes of nature have begun and how could they be maintained except through some originating and guiding intelligence? Granting the theory of development or evolution — and I was ready enough to do this — what did it reveal after all but a creation the processes of which were organic rather than merely mechanical; that is to say, a system and method that were instinct with living and present mind rather than the mere evidences that mind had been present, wrought itself into certain fabrics or processes, and then passed on to other adventures? If matter were all that we could discover in the universe, then at least it was matter endowed with such marvellous capacities that we should be forced to reconsider all our old definitions of it. Then there was the deep-seated feeling of which Butler speaks. Whether rational or not, it was there, and it was a tenant of the soul who refused to be evicted — this conviction that the main idea which underran the

Christian faith was sound. And finally there was the fact that, so far as my experience went, this same Christian faith, when accepted and wrought over into conduct had proved to be, as Matthew Arnold put it, 'incomparably beneficent.'

Then, further, as I was driven to thought upon the phenomena which physical science was at that time discovering and arraying in such marvellous profusion, it seemed significant that so many doors into the heart of things were opening. But it was more significant that these doors opened only to the knocking of intelligence; and that when they did open intelligence seemed to come out to greet and welcome the visitor. The human intelligence that questioned and the Intelligence of the Universe that answered bore every evidence of being close akin. There was a common language and there were common standards. Moreover, this language seemed to have escaped its Babel, and like a true *lingua franca*, it passed current everywhere. Wherever mind knocked, whether it were in the realm of astronomy or physics, chemistry or applied mechanics, mind came out to answer if the summons were respectful and neighborly. So far as the heavens were explored law seemed to be in them; and as the depths of the sea were plumbed the same law appeared to run there.

Beyond all this great affinities appeared between different manifestations of the force which seemed to animate the universe. Light, heat, motion or power were no longer separate and unrelated things. There was such co-partnership here that each might

upon occasion represent the firm. The doctrine of the Conservation of Energy might or might not have found its complete statement; but it was both explicit and authoritative enough to make me feel that the power which manifested itself in so many ways and always intelligently, so far as we could gain a comprehensive view of its working, was fundamentally an expression of intelligence, and of an intelligence that respected its own orderly constitution. In short, when mind or its servant came out of every door that was properly approached it seemed reasonable to suppose that in that dwelling Mind made its home. I was like Christian in the rooms of the Interpreter's House. So many phenomena, even when they spoke in the language of similitude, carried their message to life that I was justified in concluding that all phenomena had meaning; that each, if I could but really grasp it, would prove to be consistent with its fellow, and that the House itself was the home of a Master whose intelligence pervaded it, and for his guest who might find somewhere in it a chamber called Peace with windows looking toward the sunrising. There was room in a rational man's experience for the Idea of God.

It remained to gain some notion of the true content of the Idea. Here Matthew Arnold's method of approach helped. Whatever may have been the origin of the idea of creator and ruler, there evidently came a time when highly endowed men perceived the existence of a vital relation between the world of events and the conduct of man.

Somewhere there was a power making for righteousness. Call this, if you please, the Genius of the Race; still it remained distinct from and above the individual. It gave a certain consistency and direction to his life; united him in natural and helpful bonds to his fellows; made his experience memorable and appealing. When he yielded himself wholeheartedly to this Power a new and higher appraisal was placed upon the common events of life. Under these conditions the temporal began to be shot through with the light of the Eternal. The good man could not be permanently put down. If he fell, it was to rise again; if he died, it was to live again. No immunity from life's vicissitude was vouchsafed to him; but amid its chance his integrity, learned of the Eternal who made for right and truth, was a constant factor. By it the man was made superior to common circumstance. Poverty could not permanently belittle him; it was against human experience that he and his seed should beg their bread; nor could tyranny and exile forever keep him from his own.

As ages passed, many of them laden with bitter trouble, this faith in the Eternal instead of being clouded or crushed, brightened and developed. Prophetic eyes beheld in Him not merely the inspirer of man in his struggle with destiny and the arbiter of his fate, but the indwelling intelligence of the Universe. To be sure, He was not to be defined in any one convenient sentence; nor were his features to be discerned or limned. But the Order of Life which empowered men best as individuals — the order of

freedom and restraint, of balanced and regulated faculty, of consideration for the rights and for the worth of others — this seemed so nearly parallel to the great ordinances that brought a developing and rational life into being amid what once seemed the chaos of material circumstance that it was inevitable for some men to assign them to the same source. It was inevitable because as an hypothesis it was reasonable enough to be worth trying.

But, this hypothesis enunciated, it was equally inevitable that a further step should be taken and that the qualities and attributes of a *person* should be assigned to this Source which though very imperfectly apprehended, men had so long called God. It was inevitable because again as an hypothesis it was reasonable enough to be worth trying.

In my own experience and never more clearly than in the day of doubt I found my heart and my flesh crying out for a living God. Augustine's often quoted but never hackneyed words meant as much to me as they seemed to mean to him: 'Thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee.' What I thought to be reason was active and imperious; and what seemed to be reason in other and wiser men had equally to be taken into account. But instinct was quite as self-assertive and here too the instinct of other men insisted rightfully upon being considered. It was commonly thought in my days of doubt that reason made against faith while instinct made for it. This is only partially true since both seem at some times to be

upon one side of the contest and again upon the other. But it is true as Butler suggests at the close of Chapter XXVII of 'Erewhon' that 'reason uncorrected by instinct is as bad as instinct uncorrected by reason.'

Here I was, then, with Reason urging upon me the invalidity of some things commonly reckoned highly important to Religion, but urging quite as insistently the validity of the fundamental idea that the world was saturated with thought, ordered by thought, was, indeed, in its essence but an embodiment of intelligence to this degree at least that law ran everywhere and that what men call blind chance always retreated as human questions became more searching and reasonable. Instinct at the same time cried out for some nexus with this central and regulative intelligence. It declined to be orphaned and abandoned in a world where there was such evidence of Something that could know and will and order events. There was a half indignant feeling that a liberty were being taken with one — a quite unjustifiable liberty — if the mind were permitted a sort of mechanical and official intercourse with this Power not Ourselves while all the rest that made up self were shut out and denied. And when it became further evident that this Power not Ourselves touched conduct and touched it so vitally as to make for righteousness — for there seemed to be no getting away from Matthew Arnold's conclusion here — it then seemed doubly extraordinary that those functions of self which we call feeling and will should be shut out and denied. It was not

only not irrational to ascribe to this central Soul of Things enough personality to give ground to this *nexus* or incipient communion; it seemed a practical necessity to the sanest and most reasonable life and conduct.

Here was something then which I was driven to believe in and hold on to and call God. The capital letter with which one writes it is significant; because while this faith was not held dogmatically, nor was the Idea of God completely defined, yet there was a sense of inadequate expression of experience both for one's self and for the race if the Idea were not personified.[1]

Our highest notion of things toward which our whole being goes out is always expressed in terms of personality and with less than this we cannot remain permanently satisfied. The further advanced we become the more we are likely to insist on looking to personality as the ultimate key to experience. We may begin if we please with a Stream of Tendency and move on to a 'Shining which makes for righteousness'; but we shall be convinced sooner or later that we are expressing our deeper experiences in but shallow and partial phrase if we keep back the ascription of personal attributes from our Idea of God. Just now I am not defining this Idea in any

[1] It is not the purpose of this little book to go deeply into philosophical questions, but the reader may here be referred to such statements as the following by a 'neo-realist' like Professor R. B. Perry as furnishing a partial parallel to what has been said above. 'My God is my world practically recognized in respect of its fundamental or ultimate attitude to my ideals. In this sense then, conveyed by the word *attitude*, my God will invariably possess the characters of personality.' (*Approach to Philosophy*, p. 109.)

extended or particular manner; but rather setting forth the essential germ of faith to which experience forced me to cling and to which reason seemed to justify my clinging.

CHAPTER V

THE BIBLE

In an earlier chapter I have spoken of the foundations to which the college youth of my day were accustomed to look when called upon to defend or systematize their faith. I can also remember occasional moments in mere boyhood when the problem presented itself as to what might be said if any one should deny the main tenets of religion. An active boy was not, to be sure, likely to follow this problem very far or feel very deeply concerned about its outcome; but none the less I recall my decision to rest upon the Bible. The fact that this was by no means a logically ultimate foundation was quite clear to me then; but my course of reasoning was that, since I was plainly incapable of tracing everything to its source and must depend to some extent upon the conclusions of others; since, furthermore, the Bible was a book of immense authority and influence, reverenced by the worthiest people I knew, and gripping my own heart and conscience by what seemed to be a sort of divine right, I would abide by it as an authority. The decision might be in a measure arbitrary; but a line of defence had to be chosen somewhere; and this seemed a secure position; so nearly impregnable, indeed, that a boy entrenched there could get his lessons, read books, shoot ducks, and catch fish with a quiet mind.

There is a notion abroad among those who have

made literary capital of the Puritan theology that in such communities and families as ours there was a quite superstitious reverence for the Bible. This was not the impression which my boyhood received. While it is true that some views of the Bible, if carried sternly to their logical conclusion, might have issued in superstition, it must be remembered that relatively few views in any department of human experience are so treated, and that the better class of New-Englanders, while highly respectful toward logical consistency, were by no means lacking in common sense. Most of them, moreover, were so suspicious of superstition as to be in danger of going to the other extreme and failing in good taste if not in reverence. I remember a story, told in Dickens' 'Child's History of England,' of the boy king, Edward VI, to whom an attendant once brought a large Bible that he might stand upon it in the endeavor to reach an inaccessible shelf or window. The King, however, would none of such a device, but, reverently raising the volume to his lips, carried it with his own hands to a place of safety. This anecdote, which was quite in keeping with one phase of Dickens' strangely mingled strength and weakness, made a deep impression upon my infant mind, and I could never reconcile myself thereafter to the use of a Bible for purposes of mere mechanical convenience; yet I suspect that in many devout families a well-worn copy, if it were big enough, would have been used without scruple to prop up a child at table, though, were the question once raised, it might have been admitted that for such

base purposes a commentary would have been better.

The authority of the Bible was accepted practically as a matter of course among devout and undevout alike; indeed, the tendency toward a superstitious reverence for the mere word and text might have been more often discovered among the latter than among the former. But the old days when it and a literature based immediately upon it formed the major part of the reading of serious-minded people had passed; nor was it, thank Heaven, any longer searched with a view to finding Hebrew names for innocent and defenceless children — an intolerable practice that peopled an earlier world and then filled its churchyards with Enochs, Calebs, Jonadabs, and Ebenezers. I am thankful to say that not one of my grandfather's five or of my father's ten children bore a Scripture name. I very well remember, however, a rather sharp rebuke from my father for what seemed to him a flippant reference to the odd names given to the divisions of the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm. He did not then know, nor did I, that this Psalm is an acrostic and that the names of these divisions are nothing but the letters of the Hebrew alphabet with which each stanza of a particular division begins. My casual reference to Beth, Gimel, or Daleth was not meant to be flippant, but rather voiced a boy's wonder at the strangeness of the words; and the incident remains in memory, perhaps, rather because it was one of the very few occasions when I thought my tolerant father did me a slight injustice, than because of its intrinsic importance. It serves to show,

however, the degree in which careful parents saw to it that no youthful Uzzah should lay a careless hand upon the Ark.

But it would be a grievous mistake to fancy that Scripture was read or taught without any critical discretion. There was a clear realization of the difference in value and authority between different parts of the sacred volume. My father early called my attention to certain of the curious regulations of Deuteronomy in something the same spirit that led me into indiscreet familiarity with Beth and Gimel. I remember, on the other hand, seeing him once lay his Bible aside after reading one of the noble passages in Isaiah with the comment that he did not believe there was more eloquent language than that anywhere. He was quite frank, too, in telling me that the fascinating and fearsome visions of the Book of Revelation were too much beyond our understanding to bear immediately upon daily thought and life. My mother was perhaps more inclined than he to hold a high doctrine of Inspiration; but she was far from feeling, with the mother of John Ruskin, that it was wise to give a growing boy the whole Bible as it came, and was a little inclined to censor family prayers when genealogies grew jejune or the domestic adventures of the patriarchs became interesting rather than profitable. She was doubtless right, though I confess to a certain sympathy both then and now with the robuster taste of my father, who inclined to take the thing as it came wheat and chaff alike. In literature and religion as elsewhere the endeavor to bolt our wheat

until every trace of seemingly indigestible husk is removed tends toward anæmia.

This attitude of reverence for the Bible, but a reverence that was not entirely uncritical and certainly not superstitious, was that in which I grew to manhood. It was an inspired Book. I did not try to define inspiration very exactly and I inclined to say 'Book' rather than 'literature.' There was again an instinctive selection when it came to one's own devotional reading. The early narratives were read for their intrinsic interest and because of some half-discerned appreciation of their high literary quality. The Prophets were rather neglected except for the more musical sections of Isaiah. The rugged eloquence of Amos and his equally rugged social gospel were not yet discerned. Most of the Psalms waited for a deeper experience of life to open their treasuries. The Gospels suffered from the too frequent tendency to interpret them 'tenderly' and with an appeal to feeling that was from infancy completely antipathetic to me. The robuster tone of Acts found me rather more quickly, and the Epistle of James, so far from being 'strawy,' in Luther's famous phrase, was perhaps one of the last that I would have given up; while, if I had been forced to choose a 'favorite chapter,' the choice might very probably have fallen upon the twelfth of the Epistle to the Romans, so compact it seemed of high doctrine and sound sense.

Then with university life came a realization that there were forces tending to throw doubt upon many of our received notions concerning Scripture. The doctrine of Development was in the air, and with it

a tendency to feel that the wonder and consequent authority of anything was seriously diminished when the processes by which it came into being were revealed. Scripture that grew gradually out of a people's experience, reflecting as it grew their own partial visions, ideals, and attainment, seemed likely to prove of doubtful authority. Nor were the earlier efforts to 'reconcile science and the Bible' calculated to reassure a doubter. I had been taught to believe that the 'days' of the Creation represented extended periods of time rather than common days of four and twenty hours. This was thought to be the liberal and progressive view with which the churches of our order were generally in sympathy. While in college I remember to have heard one of the most distinguished of American geologists lecture on a Sunday afternoon upon the essential agreement between the order of creation as revealed by his science and that set forth in Genesis. The argument, of course, was, that, granting the 'days' of Genesis to have been extended periods of time, and showing, as the lecturer proposed to do, that the order of creative process as set forth there was practically identical with that to which the rocks bore witness, then the authority of Holy Scripture not merely remained unimpugned but was actually reinforced.

I gladly accepted this reinforcement though it was not long before its helpfulness began to be called in question; nor very long before serious doubt arose as to whether attempts at this sort of reconciliation were at all worth the making except as excursions among the curiosities of literature or of science. It

gradually became plain that the authority of the Bible, if it had any (and I could not deny the patent fact that it had), must be upheld by methods different from these. Yet I did not then, nor do I now, incline to throw any contempt upon those early, awkward, and sometimes quite mistaken endeavors to combat or to placate what seemed to be the hostile advance of science. Men knew the great essential teachings of the Bible to be true. They knew them to be true because generations of their race had put them to the test of living. Upon the whole they indisputably made for righteousness and the happiness and stability that come from righteousness. No sane man who had made trial of them could lightly think of their surrender as though they no longer had authority. On the other hand, clear-minded and conscientious men everywhere realized that a principle of first-rate importance to ordered human knowledge had appeared with the advent of the doctrine of Development, or Evolution. Their knowledge of it was as yet inchoate but it evidenced its own reality and gave sure promise of possessing a larger field as time went on. There was no denying this. Despite the outcry of mere reaction on one side and the ill-judged enthusiasm of irresponsible advocates on the other, the thing was here and evidently here to be lived with.

Of course, the religious conservative who knew religion to be true, but had a meagre faith in its vitality and no vision of its power to grow, raged; and equally of course the scientific fanatic who knew science to be essentially sound, but who jumped so

nimbly to highly unscientific conclusions as to the validity and range of certain mere hypotheses, imagined vain things. Meanwhile, wise men, who had faith in a universe wherein genuine experience was never likely to be put to permanent confusion, cast about for some common ground on which to live and learn together. Many of their attempts were awkward; but upon the whole the efforts at reconciliation were better judged than the polemics. The scientific man lecturing upon Geology and Genesis might not be very convincing; but he was headed in the right direction inasmuch as he was striving to find room for two great experiences of man to demonstrate their validity and essential consonance. Whereas Mr. Gladstone defending 'The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture' or Professor Huxley rescuing the Gadarene swine from Gennesaret, only to drown them again in the sea of his rhetoric and to gloat over their struggles in those limpid waters, was really further from the mark. 'Impregnable Rocks' are foreign to the genius of true religion which is always a vital and growing thing, while Mr. Huxley herding his long-suffering swine seems now almost as remote from reality as Don Quixote charging windmills. Long ago these poor creatures became but jetsam upon the surface of synoptic tradition. Mr. Huxley helped, no doubt, to jettison them, but, as a theologian, he would have been better employed in the large constructive task to which Matthew Arnold set himself.

It can all be looked at very calmly now, but in the

eighties thoughtful young men were deeply concerned with such questions as the quality and measure of inspiration, the authorship of the Pentateuch and of Isaiah, the place of the miraculous in revelation, the validity of the Fourth Gospel, and the problem of the Virgin Birth. Some of them who were devoutly attached to the Bible wondered whether anything would be left when the critics were done; and many of the critics themselves seemed to forget that true criticism has always a twofold task. It must be as much concerned to let nothing real pass as unreal as it is to let nothing unreal pass as real.[1] Unfortunately, the critics of that day, as of most days which are in love with criticism, attacked the negative side of their task with so much gusto as to leave little strength or time for the positive. Such a multitude of things once thought to be real were very properly shown to be unreal, that an air of unreality was shed over the whole field of religion, and slight attention was given to the fact that a good many realities of priceless worth were in danger of eclipse or denial. In so far as Biblical criticism has had this result, it has failed in allegiance to its calling. It has too often seemed to be illustrating the parable of the swept and empty house, and to be more interested in getting out old rubbish than in making the house livable for the tenants of a new day. We were not to be blamed if at times we wondered whether the house would ever again be

[1] I owe this distinction to Dr. G. A. Gordon of Boston as quoted by Professor J. W. Buckham: *Progressive Religious Thought in America*, p. 127.

habitable except by scribes playing their professional game.

But it is of the nature of the house of faith to be hospitable and eventually to win men to take up their abode in it; and when criticism had done its utmost with the Bible, behold, there was still a place for belief to dwell and a value quite beyond calculation still left to this body of religious literature.

In the first place, as I came to think the thing through, it appeared clear that the Bible was a fact of human experience that could not be belittled very seriously or explained away at all by any theory of its origin, composition, and authorship. It was a composite literature, of course, instead of a single volume, but this rather enhanced its significance inasmuch as it now reflected the consciousness of a singularly endowed people through generations of experience, instead of a series of chapters in the life of one man or little group of men. In spite of the fact that Genesis in its present form is far from the earliest book of the Old Testament, its opening words, 'In the beginning God,' give the key to the whole literature and in some sense to the history of Israel. No other body of writing is so possessed with the idea of God as the background of personal and national life — a Power making for righteousness and insisting upon righteousness. No other people ever voiced so high an idea of God so eloquently or with so few excursions into base and degraded anthropomorphisms. Crudities appear, of course, and ideas of early and barbarous times are reflected

from page after page; but through them the reader marks the growth of great and ruling religious ideas. He sees a rude people worshipping a tribal god with rites more or less superstitious and cruel. But among the early traditions of this people he finds a story of marvellous beauty interdicting human sacrifice, and a nucleus of law that is predominantly ethical. The whole movement of the Old Testament is toward a God who is a God of Righteousness and toward a Law which, instead of being merely ceremonial, is inspired by moral distinctions.

As time passed and the experience of Israel was enlarged, we find the higher flights of prophet and psalmist adapted to the use of all times and all men. This experience of a little people was now universalized for a world. The fact that this was done unconsciously only enhances its wonder and its charm. The writer of the Second Isaiah could not have known that his 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength' would be translated into every language of a world greater than he dreamed of for the strengthening of men's hearts; nor could the exiled singer by the waters of Babylon have possibly imagined that his Psalms would remain, two and a half millenniums later, among the most cherished possessions of people stranger in speech and vastly more puissant in knowledge and dominion than his Mesopotamian overlords.

Nor is it possible to explain away the cogency of the New Testament. Any criticism valid enough to care as honestly for substantiating the real as for exposing the unreal must acknowledge the unique

power which has dwelt in the life and words of Jesus and in the doctrine of the Apostles. The claim of their enemies that these men were turning the world upside down has been justified. The great doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount, of the reinterpretation of the Law into the two commandments enjoining love to God and man, of the Kingdom of God as something to be finally realized in this world, of the Divine Spirit as a true Helper in the exigencies of common life, of patience and long-suffering under affliction and of willing self-spending in the higher interests of others have, to be sure, never been universally adopted. But they have profoundly influenced the faith and conduct of vast numbers of individuals and groups; and what is more they have shown their ability to dignify commonplace lives and in turn to render them influential in a unique degree. Wherever men have learned what Matthew Arnold so happily called the 'secret' and applied the 'method' of Jesus, they have developed power. Nor has this power seemed to wane or diminish as time has passed. A man like Tolstoi may become obsessed with a single aspect of this secret and method, and exaggerate or universalize it to the point where he ceases to regard some of the commonest rights of those near to him; yet, if he seem to be sincere in this, self-denying and earnest, the world will take respectful heed of him and make his house a shrine; so quick is its conscience to understand even if it do not accept the language of the New Testament. So the Christian missionary has often been regarded by the world at large as a passing phenomenon of

fanaticism. Many have thought that, with the advent and acceptance of changed views about the Bible, or with greater freedom of theological speculation, the 'nerve of missions would be cut.' The phrase has become almost hackneyed by repetition. But it has not proved so. As experience has widened and men's views of religion with it, the New Testament injunction to go out and teach the method and secret of Jesus as a means of salvation has appealed to more men than ever before. Not only men of mystic and pietistic habit have heard and heeded; but in a notable degree men of scientific, medical, and mechanical gifts and training have felt that they were subject to this command; until today Christian missions have become a world power and are likely long to remain a chief agency for the interpretation, not merely of peoples, but of religious and cultural ideals to one another.

Further than this there appeared to be no denying the vast influence that has been exerted by this literature upon the language and culture of the world. A great language like the German reached its modern and accepted form very largely through Luther's translation of the Bible. A vast number of savage tongues or dialects owe their reduction to written form and their consequent preservation to the fact that Christian missionaries have undertaken their study with a view to preaching the Gospel and translating Scripture. It is probably quite within bounds to say that no other single agency has done so much for philology in the realm of primitive and hitherto unwritten languages as the Bible. Mean-

while its influence upon English literature is so plain that he who runs may read. Beowulf and Cædmon are saturated with Biblical thought; Chaucer and Shakespeare are rich in allusion; there could hardly have been a Milton without the Bible; and their successors down to the present who have vitality enough to give any promise of survival are so in debt to Scripture as scarce to be intelligible to such as do not know their Old and New Testaments.

The student of art finds himself in a like debt. An afternoon's casual stroll through the Uffizi and Pitti palaces is enough to convince him of the source whence the greatest of painters drew their subjects and not a little of their inspiration. While the briefest visit to cathedral cities or a glance from his car window as the railway carries him from Munich to Stuttgart will suggest how much poorer architecture must have been without the spiritual urge that moulded the dome of Saint Peter's, reared the spire of Salisbury, or fabricated the mighty parish church of Ulm. Into all these noble fabrics, after making every allowance for the ambition and possible vainglory of a building age, there went something that owned the Bible as a source.

Beyond this there yet remains the Bible's highest claim to reality in the fact that it has unquestionably furnished multitudes of men with a practicable way of salvation. The reader may put such construction upon that word as he pleases. It is meant to convey, at this point in our discussion, the idea of such adequacy to earthly circumstance as leads a man to the conquest of his world. No one who knows plain

people can for a moment doubt that he has seen the words of Saint Paul illustrated again and again among them; 'as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things';[1] and that the secret of their mastery of the world has been taught them from this Book.

For myself, then, it seemed clear that some authority remained in it and spoke from it. Despite all the change that new views of both science and religion as well as the specific criticism of competent scholars necessitated, this authority continued to be considerable in extent and cogent in quality. It seemed impossible to deny that the Bible's 'Way of Life' was a practicable way. What was the secret of this? How far did this authority extend? These were questions that still waited answers.

Here again, as I thought my way through, it grew increasingly evident that this authority did not depend upon an inspiration that guaranteed perfection of style or freedom from error in the narrative itself or in the characters that seemed to be the heroes of the narrative. It was a distinct relief, not merely to faith, but to the literary and religious problem which the existence and the influence of the Bible set, when one realized that it was quite as rich in legend as in historical tradition or in history. There was no question but that the songs of Israel had been used for generations as an almost unique means of spiritual uplift. Why should not the leg-

[1] 2 Cor. 6: 9–10.

ends and traditions of the same people, if they were sufficiently infused with spiritual meaning, be used in the same way? Why should not Hebrew myths, if there were any, be used as freely? To be sure, pretty diligent search seemed to show that there was very little if any real myth in Scripture. A trace might perhaps be discerned in the mysterious reference to the sons of God and the daughters of men in Genesis, but, generally speaking, the mythical seemed foreign to the literary habit and genius of the Hebrew. He was almost equally chary of the fabulous, the fable of Jotham in Judges 9: 7–21 providing almost a unique instance of that literary form. But in the field of tradition, legend, and parable saturated with ethical and spiritual meaning, he was rich beyond all other peoples. The story of creation gained immeasurably when the reader was permitted to discover the real heart of it in the words, 'In the beginning God,' rather than in the details of the successive appearances of firmament, sea, beast, and man. The evident relation to the Babylonian tradition rather enhanced than hurt this sense of uniqueness as the reader saw how much higher and nobler the Hebrew conception of the divine proved to be, and how quickly the Hebrew tradition concerned itself with the central problem of human conduct, somewhat crudely conceived at first, to be sure, but rising rapidly into a clearer atmosphere, until in the case of Abraham it took on character that is at once appealing and heroic.

It seemed equally clear that this authority did not depend primarily upon the miraculous element in

the Biblical narratives. When doubt first assailed the elder views of the Bible, it dealt primarily with this miraculous element. Miracles were strenuously defended for two reasons. In the first place, because a carefully wrought system of dogmatic theology was in vogue which seemed to depend very largely upon the miraculous for its validity. A 'scheme of salvation' had been devised with the greatest learning, skill, and zeal, and the rather mechanical working of this hinged upon certain extraordinary interferences of God with the natural processes of life. These were accepted as a sort of guaranty of his good faith in the whole matter. Then in the second place, as has been intimated before, it was thought necessary to maintain the utter uniqueness of the Bible as a book and of the revelation therein contained. If these were indeed divine, then they must be not merely mysterious, as all things are, but in some special sense mystifying. The modern world was just as insistent upon a 'sign' as were the multitudes who thronged Jesus and plagued him with their curiosity. It must not be supposed that so-called 'believers' had any monopoly of this idea. The skeptics and 'agnostics' — one scarcely writes the overworked word nowadays without apology — were bitten with the same itch for making much of the miraculous. To one it seemed as though unless he defended the miraculous all the fields of faith must lie open to the spoiler; while the other vaunted himself in the assurance that if he could puncture the bubble of some half-dozen received miracles, then 'revealed' religion as hitherto understood must go

by the board altogether. Neither remembered the truth so admirably voiced by Coleridge that 'All knowledge begins and ends in wonder; but the first wonder is the child of ignorance; the second is the parent of adoration.'

It was only by degrees and after much tribulation of mind that the truth really came home to me — of course, it had been known as an abstract proposition before — that 'revelation' had an obverse side known as 'discovery,' and that God was not likely to find himself so bankrupt in resource that he must needs use a new and unique language in order to tell men that they were akin to him and that he loved them. It might well suffice to use the language of every day and of common affairs; but at the same time it was inevitable that unique incidents should occur and unique impressions be gained in the course of so notable a procedure. It was not in the least necessary to the authority of prophecy that a given prophet should have foretold the precise fashion in which the raiment of Jesus should be divided among his executioners. Indeed, there would be to the mind of to-day something a little meticulous and peddling in such credentials as these. Whatever authority Jesus might have, it could not well be enhanced to me by such foretelling as this.

So if he were conceived by the Holy Ghost — that is, as I believed, born with an especial mission to the world and in the fulfilment of a special purpose of the divine Good-Will — it was quite evident that he had a physical body and that some means must have been employed to provide this. What better

means than the normal union of a human father and mother whereby his brethren with whom he was forever striving to identify himself came by their bodies? Or, to anticipate matter for future discussion, why should the undying hope of a life, in which death should become but an incident, depend upon proof of the physical resurrection of Jesus? It is not the physical frame that a believing man hopes to receive again; it is rather some spiritual organ for the expression of himself, some analogue to the physical even better adapted to the future life than flesh and blood have been to this. The essentials of the experience and message of Jesus that make for faith are not bound up with the miracle of a physical body returning uncorrupted from the grave. If they exist, they must be sought elsewhere. In short, as has often been observed of late, it became evident that faith based upon other foundations had of late years been maintaining the miracles, rather than miracles faith.

It therefore naturally remained to throw the miraculous overboard as so much useless and possibly dangerous lumber? I do not think so. The Bible is too great a book and religion too great an experience to permit such sudden and cavalier treatment. The wonder of revelation — 'of the stars above and the moral law within' — still remains and is likely to remain. Crude ideas of the miraculous, as though it consisted in arbitrary and fanciful fussing, not only with the established order of the world, but with the fundamental concepts of cause and effect, must of course go. It is a question,

indeed, whether they were ever here except in the form of men of straw set up to be knocked down. But the spirit and attitude of wonder must remain among all men who are really instructed in the marvellous complexity of the universe and in the equally marvellous ability of man to grasp certain features of its scheme and pattern, to seize some threads in his own questing hands and to weave them anew at the bidding of a mysterious creative instinct that testifies to his essential lordship over physical circumstance.

If it were worth while one could catalogue a considerable list of modern scientific achievements that seem to the intelligent but partially instructed man to be like miracles in the old and bad meaning of that much-abused term. Here, for instance, is a conversation apparently carried on by telephone between Boston and New York. The bystander, who knows that sound travelling at its normal rate must need over fifteen minutes to make this journey, and that granting a connection by copper wire it must still require a considerable time, has a right to be skeptical. A well-established natural law verified by experiment and common experience alike seems to be seriously tampered with. Yet, as he might phrase it, 'The sound certainly travels.' He recognizes the voice of a friend and he receives an immediate answer to a question. Investigation fails to show any deception about the matter; and I have known at least one fairly intelligent man completely unable to say wherein a recognized law of nature had not been superseded or suspended, if not broken. Of

course, no such thing has taken place; no true 'sound vibration' has passed from Boston to New York either through the air or the connecting wire; but an electric disturbance has been communicated of such a sort as to vibrate the New York telephone-diaphragm in a manner identical with the voice-vibration in the Boston instrument; and a correspondent voice-effect is produced. In my own opinion here is a true miracle — that is, a very marvellous event the true nature of which is such that an observer who was both honest and intelligent, but scientifically uninstructed, would be bound to describe it in terms that an electrician would be certain to call faulty and might call false. I do not for a moment claim it to be the analogue of the miracles of Scripture. Yet it seems natural to suppose that men of the faith, training, and experience of the writers of Scripture introduced into the world of to-day and trying honestly to describe it would fill their pages with marvels; and these marvels so reported would seem incredible to the man of to-day, because described in terms and ascribed to agencies unfamiliar to his ordinary thought. The Hebrew tended to refer all the activities of the world about him directly to his God; the man of to-day, be he never so devout a believer, does not. Moreover, the Hebrew of the type that composed the greater Bible writings, though he might be a keen and accurate observer of natural phenomena, saw them in their ethical and religious bearing. Amos walking through the bazaar was as quick as any sanitary inspector to discern a basket of decaying

fruit; but it suggested to him, and has continued to suggest to the world, the doom of corrupt and luxurious Israel rather than a mere agent of possible enteric disturbance.

It is for such reasons as these that a man who has ceased to regard the miraculous (in the common and narrow sense of the word) as of the essence of faith, is still inclined to treat the miracles of Scripture with a certain respect. Here are no mere old wives' tales. Some are reflections of notable historical events; some attempt to describe natural but unusual phenomena; some have no doubt grown up as other hero tales of folk-lore grew. But nearly all bear testimony, whatever their source, to profound and far-reaching spiritual experience, than which there is nothing more real in this world. And it is primarily as a chief history, source and organ of the highest spiritual experience, age-long and world-wide, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments still retain a real authority.

CHAPTER VI

WHO WAS JESUS CHRIST?

The title of this chapter has occupied men since Jesus Christ was born. One is quite within bounds in saying that no other person ever lived whose descent, birth, and nature have filled the thought of the scientific, the devout, and the merely curious in anything like the same degree. To the men who touched him casually, observing, as any intelligent person might, his words and acts with the response of other men to them, he seemed to be a Galilean of humble station, but of remarkable powers, who was making an extraordinary impress upon his day. He had some claim to be a prophet, for, added to a wide acquaintance with the law and history of his people, there was a unique gift for reinterpreting these in terms of universal human aspiration and need. He was a wonder-worker in the eyes of the multitude, and even those who would gladly have denied unusual powers to him if they could, seemed forced to admit that when face to face with disease, especially of the neurotic sort, and in dealing with masses of men likely to be swept by the mob-spirit of superstition or violence, he developed marvellous resources. Some may have thought him an impostor, but none who came into immediate and vital touch with him seemed to be able to maintain that view for very long. He was too indifferent to the prizes of

wealth and power which selfish men covet; too careless of mere popularity; and quite too sacrificial of his own chances, to say nothing of his time, strength, convenience, and personal safety, to make this explanation tenable.

Beyond all this he had such gifts for delving beneath the surface of every question that was brought to him as not merely to disconcert, but often to convict, the merely curious inquirer. A just and honorable man once came to make inquest into the quality of his teaching. A pretender would have been flattered and have flattered in his turn. But this Galilean took occasion to expound the heart of strange new doctrines and sent the wise man forth wondering if even he must be born anew, from above, and of a Spirit whom as yet he had not realized, in order really to complete himself and his destiny. A woman of dubious life met him casually as she went to draw water. Used, too used indeed, to ready converse with such men as the day brought, she was at once impressed with the quality of this stranger. As his talk proceeded, it became uncomfortably intimate without any of those notes of intimacy to which she had grown accustomed. She strove to guide the conversation into safer channels. But it would not do. And so she was fain to acknowledge finally that here was some one who had told her all that she had ever done. It was not by any means an agreeable picture of her life that had been painted for her; yet singularly enough it was even further from being a disheartening picture. This candor of his was always revealing men to themselves; yet,

except where pride or cruelty barred real understanding, it seemed to spring from sympathy rather than censoriousness.

But remarkable as was the response of the sick, the curious, and the sinful to him, that of the men whom he made his special companions was more remarkable still. Indeed, the main object of his ministry as distinguished from his death seemed to be to train this group to perpetuate and spread his work. They were plain men, of humble life and small experience of the world. Some seem to have possessed marked natural abilities while others were little removed from the commonplace. None appears to have been especially quick to understand his Master's purpose, secret, and method. Yet as time passed the mysterious power which they felt but could not define began to organize a faith as well as a loyalty within them. Not until after his departure did they work out anything like a theory to place and account for him; although there were moments of real insight as well as hours of mistaken ambitions and hopes before that time. But daily association with him made itself felt. A rough fisherman like Peter underwent development from a creature of gusty impulse to a man of powerful and inspiring character. Some prejudices remained and sundry occasional weaknesses still showed themselves; but the man became and continued a worthy leader whose word had power, whose life gave efficacy to his word, and whose death crowned all. The Boanerges, James and John, seemed to have found a like transforming influence in association with Jesus.

No doubt this transformation has been in some degree exaggerated in the popular mind and that, if we of the modern world could be thrown into daily contact with the ancient saints, our notion of saintliness might suffer considerable change. But the saints were a reality for all that. There seems to be no explaining away, by any process of criticism worthy of the name, the power that first possessed and then went forth from these disciples after their experience of Jesus' life and death. And when Saul of Tarsus was added to them, intellectual, spiritual, and practical gifts of the first magnitude came with him. The apostles and disciples of the Galilean were still a little company. But the Roman Empire had never wrestled with such doughty antagonists. It was, indeed, a wrestling match rather than a battle. These men were not enemies. They insisted, more or less in the spirit of their Master, that they were friends; that the true spirit of continuance amid the flux and change of history for individual and government alike was with them, and that their principles must finally prevail. It was even so; and though their principles were but lamely and partially applied, still in due time they succeeded in turning the Empire itself to their purposes. How far these were from the purposes of Jesus need not be pointed out in this place. Time had brought about a sort of reversion to type, and the mistaken ambitions of the sons of Zebedee with their hope of high places in a restored kingdom of Israel found their counterpart in the ambition of Constantine and the pushing ecclesiastics of Rome and Constantinople.

But through it all there remained something of the original and ever mysterious power under the impulse of which men could not rest in the material or satisfy themselves with nominal and formal conquests of the world. The monks made their protest, often savage and sometimes orgiastic, against the dominion of the flesh. Here and there an individual Telemachus, moved by Christian pity, gave his life to seal his testimony against the old pagan cruelties of the arena. Churches were reared and a gospel of love and forgiveness proclaimed. The 'principle of the crust' was active here as elsewhere in life, and even the gospel when in constant contact with the world tended to form a sort of exterior callus that hindered its vital principle from an adequate leavening of man's indifference and need. But it was quite as true that there was something about the message of Jesus that could never be permanently hindered by this crust. It was a word of life that refused to be bound. Neither world, flesh, nor devil could put it to permanent silence or confusion. It persisted through all the influence of polytheism and mysticism, through the struggle with heresy, the conflicting imperial ambitions of East and West, the ineffable corruption and disorder of the so-called Dark Ages, and the conceits and follies as well as the great achievements of the Renaissance. In every generation there were some who heard and heeded after the manner of true disciples. And when men like Augustine, Dominic, and Francis of Assisi, or Savonarola, Luther, and the Wesleys spoke, the world realized again the genuine efficacy that

could still issue from the life and message of Jesus. There was truth here that had an unquestionable affinity for life. It could not be ignored or gainsaid.

This was one of the significant things that I observed in looking out over the troubled religious world of my youth. Jesus Christ had died more than eighteen hundred years before and yet his influence seemed still to be one of the most vital factors in the world I knew. Just how this influence was to be defined and what the link might be that bound his day to mine, I did not ask; but it was evident that he had gone further than any one else in forming the conscience of the age, and however careless the world at large might seem to be of the claims of conscience, I already knew that, sleepless as it is and constant as is the urge of the still small voice, it represents a force as real as electricity or steam, and often far more cogent. Here certainly was something to believe in, something for faith to take hold of! And yet —!

The trouble was that I had been using the less rather than the more dependable material at hand for the foundation of my faith in Jesus Christ. I had thought about him in theological rather than in moral terms; the metaphysical had seemed more divine than the ethical, and the mysterious more worshipful than the obvious. This is not to cast any slur upon the theological, the metaphysical, or the mysterious. All are legitimate, and, if history be any guide, necessary fields of human adventure. The more I have doubted, the more convinced have I become of an underlying reality in each. But in the

development of a rational faith they do not furnish the normal and adequate foundations.

I had thought of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, not in the simple and natural sense in which he himself seems to have used the term, but as an assertion at the very outset of a divinity which no human being could contain and yet which seemed to be summed up in him. It was as though I had set out on the quest of future experience with a plan that was designed to contradict all past experience. The evidences of this mysterious and practically indefinable divinity lay in the circumstances of his birth and in his power to perform signs and wonders; and further in the necessity of such a person as he was said to be in order that the scheme of salvation might be made to work adequately. Let it be understood that I am not speaking lightly or in ironic tones of all this. There is too much truth, demonstrable and experienced truth, bound up in this bundle of mistaken methods to permit an honest man to sneer.

But none the less I became convinced that it was hard for me to believe in Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour of the world on the testimony of those early chapters of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke which record the stories of his miraculous birth. As time went on, I became increasingly impatient of the efforts made by good men to substantiate the testimony of this narrative. The attempt did not seem to be germane to the result that I was after. Yet for a long time these chapters hung like a millstone about the neck of my faith when for other reasons it was struggling in the waters of doubt.

There was too much beauty, spiritual as well as literary, in this Gospel of the Infancy to make me willing to surrender it; and at the same time it seemed too intimately wrapped up with the person and mission of Jesus to make such surrender possible without further surrender of him. Well-meaning men, indeed, on every side were making the most drastic claims that any giving-up of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth or of the less probable miracles involved such surrender of faith as to endanger a man's discipleship; and I was convinced that discipleship was a possession not lightly to be given up, since Jesus Christ and his doctrine had so undeniable an affinity for life. His use of the phrase 'bread of life' concerning himself and his teaching was perfectly descriptive of the service that I had seen him render to people whom I knew and that in some degree at least I had felt him rendering to myself.

Here was a sort of *impasse*. Had it been of the kind offered occasionally by a political party to which one has belonged, but which has traded principles for policies, built a platform out of mere phrases, or accepted debauched leadership, the case, though hard, would have seemed more practicable. It is hard for the Republican to enrol himself in the Democratic ranks, for example, because while there is often so much in his own party to flee from there is likely to appear so little in the opposite party to flee to; and if he be a man of courage and conviction, he is probably out of conceit with the mere act of fleeing, into the bargain. Yet the act of asserting

entire political independence or going over to another party seemed easy and practicable as compared with that of saying that one would throw over allegiance to Jesus Christ and refuse to bear the name of Christian because of inability to accept certain clauses in the creeds or certain views long held by Christian people. Political allegiance may easily and properly be shifted for a single occasion or for a brief period while one delivers one's party over to Satan that it may learn not to blaspheme, in full hope of rejoining it again when it has returned to right faith and practice. But the shift of faith is not so readily made. In general it should never be made unless for very fundamental and comprehensive reasons which have changed the current of one's tastes and put hatred in place of love. Conviction may dictate such a change; but doubt rarely.

My position was that of a doubter. There was no inclination to let faith in Jesus Christ and his Gospel go by the board, partly because early training had made it dear and partly because it evidently had such application to life and such natural affinity for the human soul. The more I thought, the more absurd it seemed that a man should surrender his faith in the whole Christian system and abandon its way of life, because he felt its definition of God to be inadequate or over-particular, or because Mr. Huxley made so beguiling a swineherd. Indeed, the cant of the so-called 'agnostics' — and with all respect to the honesty and high purpose of some men who assumed the name, there was a flood of it — was quite as distasteful to me as the patter of the ex-

treme evangelicals. Agnosticism had become, in Dr. Johnson's words, 'a part of the clamour of the times.' [1] It was the latest fashion and some men assumed it as eagerly and unquestioningly as they sought the latest thing in hats or coats. If one ventured a question as to the reasonableness of this, they were ready with a bit of Colonel Ingersoll's orotund eloquence or with Mr. Huxley's strictures upon the miracle of the Gadarene demoniac. Both Colonel Ingersoll and Mr. Huxley were theologians of parts; the one with something of the show and the other with much of the reality of sound learning; but I could not see that the bombast of the former or the genuine charm of the latter quite justified me in throwing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, or even the Church, moribund though many assured me that it was become, out upon the dust-heap of my day.

And yet — and yet — the haunting suspicion would recur; if Moses made mistakes, as Colonel Ingersoll so flatulently insisted, what was there in the Old Testament worth keeping? Or, if Jesus did not actually cast out a legion of specific personal devils, sending them into an actual herd of swine that drowned themselves in consequence, might it

[1] Boswell was defending the Presbyterians. 'But, Sir,' said he, 'their doctrine is the same with that of the Church of England. Their Confession of Faith and the Thirty-Nine Articles contain the same points, even the doctrine of Predestination.' 'Why, yes, Sir,' replied Johnson, 'predestination was a part of the clamour of the times, so it is mentioned in our articles, but with as little positiveness as could be.' Boswell's *Johnson*, Hill's ed., II, 119.

not follow that all positive faith was vain? I could not quite admit it. But it became evident that something more than mere dogmatic assertion was needed for the maintenance of my position. Supposing the Gospels of the Infancy to be consigned to the realm of tradition, and the Gadarene devils with their swine to that of legend, how much was left? Supposing further that so much of the miraculous as seemed to be a burden rather than a support to faith should be set on one side in reckoning up the assets of my belief, was there likely to remain anything to justify my old-time reverence for Jesus Christ as more than an exceptionally gifted prophet of the Jeremiah type? Could an honest man continue under these conditions to call himself a Christian?

Two sets of people will at once answer 'No.' The fanatical 'agnostic,' with his zeal to discount religion in every feature of its appeal to man and his joy in letting what he does not know rule what he does know, will be quick to urge the fundamental place of swine and devils in the Christian system of faith. He who surrenders these surrenders all, of course. For here really is miracle at its best, just because the wonder element is stripped of all ethical significance and revealed in grotesque nakedness. There are to be no degrees of faith. He who worships with his fellows who have no doubts implies that he has none; and he who remains in fellowship with the Church implies that he accepts all that the Church has ever accepted. Here is no room for less or more. Definition of one's personal position is impracticable and refinement of the terms used in confessions of

faith is but covert dishonesty. So far the rigid and orthodox agnostic.

It would have been amusing had I been in any mood for amusement to note his close agreement with the ultra-conservative. He also was ready to count the man who questioned the incidental as a betrayer of the essential. The very idea of criticism as applied to the Bible seemed to him touched with irreverence; and his unwillingness to admit any substantial difference in inspiration between the Book of Esther and Psalm XCI, or the Epistle of Jude and the Fourth Gospel, forced him to as literal an interpretation as possible of each recorded incident. He, too, liked his miracles hot. The more natural seemed the explanation of any difficulty, the more suspicious of it he was prone to be as tending to belittle the divine element in the narrative. Only by slow degrees did the great truth once uttered by the Cambridge Platonist, Whichcote, to his friend Tuckney make its way among those who rejoiced to call themselves 'Believers': 'Sir, I oppose not rational to spiritual, for spiritual is most rational.' And it took longer yet for the true idea of criticism as a means of establishing the real quite as truly as of exposing the unreal to frame itself in their minds — a delay for which Biblical critics were themselves very largely to blame.

My freedom was not won until I could cry to 'Agnostic' and 'Believer' alike, 'A plague o' both your houses.' I would no longer submit to a treatment of religion that made it stand or fall by one or a dozen miracles; or to a treatment of miracle itself

that made it hinge upon a suspension or a breach of the 'Laws of Nature'; or a doctrine of inspiration that excluded from its scope the use of legend, tradition, and even myth (though, as has been said, I found little trace of genuine myth in the Scripture), since these seemed to me quite as conceivably fitted to be the natural channels for religious truth as song and parable which every one recognized and welcomed. Furthermore, I was prepared to insist that every feature of religious and theological doctrine which had been long maintained, centring upon itself the thought of able minds and the response of seeking hearts, however absurd its extremer forms may seem to-day and however sadly abused it may have been by dogmatic extremists, will be found to have some outward reality corresponding to the inner human experience. The fundamental fault of both the agnostic and the religious conservative appeared to be an inhumanity against which I rebelled. The agnostic was as inhumanely negative as the ultra-conservative was inhumanely assertive; the former striving to starve the religious faculty and to deny it any satisfying expression while the latter was ready to crush it under a mass of dogmatic lumber. It was only by such a declaration of spiritual independence that I could gain for myself some satisfying notion of Jesus Christ.

Who and what was he? A man of Hebrew race in all probability despite the efforts of zealous and prejudiced scholars like Mr. Chamberlain to prove the contrary. Possibly, too, though not so certainly, of ancient family and of the lineage of David. He

was humbly born, it matters little whether in Judea or Galilee; bred as an artisan; distinguished from youth by exhibitions of rare spiritual insight; and deeply cognizant of the gap between the inner soul of the great Hebrew revelation and the outward callus of observance that imprisoned it. He early became conscious of at least the possibility that he might be called to deal with the problem which the evident need of men and the unrecognized nearness and reality of God put before him. Then, with the preaching of an ascetic prophet, John, and the response of all classes to his searching words, came the impulse to special spiritual adventure. He was baptized and his adventure recognized and approved by the Baptist. But with this episode in it there came a thrilling and almost overwhelming sense of mission and access of power. A new perspective set Heaven and Earth, God and Man, in new light and relation. These were no longer remote from each other, but near to the point of potential intimacy if not identity. But most thrilling and empowering was the consciousness of the identity of God and man in himself. He felt himself to be the Son of God in such a sense that the feeling issued neither in fanaticism when he wrought in the sense of it, nor in presumption when he proclaimed it. He was equally conscious of his identification with the lot and destiny of man; and the phrase 'Son of Man' which he also applied to himself seemed to align him with the aspiring, failing, sinning, and achieving creatures around him. He was different from them in some notable respects; but the fact that he was in some

sense above them drove him as it were to covet and to claim for himself, not alignment merely, but identification. He would fain bear their sins, carry their sorrows, and feel upon himself the chastisement of their peace. In high degree he realized this ambition and no true estimate of his life and influence can be made which does not take into account this vicarious element in it.

As I meditated upon him and his work in freedom from mere dogmatic prepossession, it seemed to me that the ordinary discussions concerning his miracles and even concerning his divinity were a little beside the mark. They were scarcely germane to him and quite as likely to cloud as to clear his title to authority. He was himself the great miracle in the true sense of that abused word. That is, he was a wonder for which the experience of man up to his time failed to account. If some objector appears to confuse me with the remark that every man is such a miracle in an eminent degree, I am prepared to admit the claim without confusion; but I cannot admit it as an objection. No one has as yet plumbed the mystery of personality. It transcends our definitions and escapes our analyses. The child newborn or developing in a world of circumstance whereof he seems at once the creature and the lord, writes for each generation an equation which it can only partly solve. But he must be either a sadly prejudiced or else a very shallow observer who does not admit an extraordinary if not a unique degree of this miracle-quality in Jesus Christ. His humility and his majesty, his claims for himself and his quick

and utter spending of self for others, the ephemeral nature of his career and his abiding authority, his evident defeat at the hands of his world and the measure in which he as evidently overcame the world, all combine to put him in a class by himself. History as commonly understood does not account for him. After our explanations and expositions there remains a large residue of that aspect of humanity which, escaping human formulas, merges with what we call the divine.

It was perfectly natural that around the miraculous in Jesus Christ — the element that rouses wonder beyond our power to explain it; that cannot be reproduced at will; and that is so beneficent withal as to lead the wonder of ignorance to become the wonder of adoration — reports of other and lesser miracles should gather. Indeed it was inevitable. Some of these may well be mere wonder-traditions or legends; others are doubtless true transcripts of the impression produced by exhibitions of his remarkable powers; while others still are not merely transcripts of impressions naturally set forth in the language of the day and which we should express differently, but echoes of events caused by a power or according to a method that we should find almost equally mysterious to-day. The longer I considered the problem, the more convinced I became that no miracle in itself considered was essential to honest faith, and the less inclined I grew to dismiss the whole business of the miraculous in cavalier fashion as though it were of no especial importance or significance.

Jesus was himself the great miracle, and the more I meditated upon him, the more difficult it became for me to question his possession of a measure of wonder-working power. There was no breach of the laws and powers of Nature in this; there was rather a divine-human use of those laws in ways quite susceptible of that partial process which we call 'explanation,' but which is really the lifting of one horizon of mystery so as to reveal a larger one. But to the men of his day his power over the demon-possessed, over the tired and fretful multitudes in the wilderness, over the terrified disciples and over the sick seemed indeed past finding out. Perhaps the workings of this power were hidden from Jesus himself, though of its source in the union of the human with the divine he seems to have had no doubt. But he regarded this whole side of his ministry as incidental; he did not come to work miracles or to accredit himself by means of them. The temptation to do that had been met and vanquished at the outset of his ministry. He did not ask people to believe in him then on the ground of his miracles — unless, indeed, they chose to do so as a last resort. Nor should that request be made now. The miraculous, upon the definition of which no two men can be expected to agree, is not and cannot be fit criterion for faith; and its use for such a purpose should be abandoned forever.

'You would reduce Jesus Christ then to a mere man' gleefully cry 'Agnostic' and 'Believer' together, sure that the Lord has delivered me into their hands. To whom I would reply, in the first

place, that I do not know what that phrase 'a mere man' means nor do I believe they do; and, in the second place, that, while I would emphasize the human nature, character, and limitations of Jesus, I am instant in asserting his divinity as well; and this, not as a dogma of theology or as a deduction from accounts of his miracles, but as an induction from man's experience of him and his teachings. After trying to look at the problem from every side and with a willingness to surrender what honest criticism and a generous candor require to be given up, after setting aside the argument from miracles as irrelevant at least to the mind of our day, the fact remains that the idea of the Church Catholic about Jesus Christ as a divine-human Lord and Saviour seems to me to be essentially sound.

A considerable part of what needs to be said in explanation of this statement must go over into later chapters. It may here be pointed out, however, that what has come out of Jesus Christ into the experience of men must have been potentially resident there. The highest notion of God that men have ever attained and used has been gained, not merely from what he said, but from what he was. Whether or not one has ever been a disciple of Ritschl, the claim of that school that Jesus has a God-value is sound. His voice searching the hearts of men has the haunting and compelling quality of divinity. Though one take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, even there his great criteria of conduct toward God and man are authoritative. Though we call upon the

darkness to cover us, the night seems light itself while his eyes search the depths and springs of motive. No one else in like degree has deserved the comment of the Samaritan woman, 'Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did.' This upon the surface might seem to argue for his possession of the qualities of an omniscient cynic delighting to exploit the frailties and hypocrisies of life. But the really divine element in it all has been the evident presence of a saving purpose. His Gospel has been a veritable Way of Salvation. Men who have looked at themselves through his eyes, seen their sin as he saw it, and tried his method of cure and conquest, have found it sound and practicable. There is no possible question as to whether a facing of the evil in life, its confession, repentance, forgiveness, and reparation bring peace or not. There is no doubt as to which man is master of his world; he who carries about with him the hidden or half-hidden records of evil days, denying, dodging, or shirking their consequences as best he can, or the man who has faced his past in the spirit and dealt with it after the method of Jesus.

This is his Way of Salvation. Instruction in it is implicit in his life taken as a whole; explicit in certain of his doctrines and notably in the great adventure of his death. It is not for nothing that some of the most powerful minds since his day have occupied themselves with speculation as to the place and power of that act of sacrifice. A matter which filled the thought of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Anselm, Calvin, Hugo Grotius, and Horace Bush-

nell, is not likely to be of merely factitious or artificial moment. The fact that such men gave their best to it and found the theme worthy of their effort does not, of course, prove its validity or general worth; but it establishes a considerable probability. The two or three generations lately passed which have been ready to sneer at all this as so much ado about nothing, have prided themselves upon being 'scientific'; in point of fact their cocksureness has been sophomoric rather than really wise; and it will be one of the tasks of their successors to recover some pearls of truth and experience which they too carelessly trod under foot. The vast place and worth of vicarious sacrifice is one of these. Men have scoffed at the idea of it. Even Matthew Arnold, whose measure as one of the constructive theologians of his time has not yet been adequately taken, makes Obermann assert that

> No man can share his brother's woe
> Or pay his brother's debt; —

a statement to which life is always giving the lie. The large place filled by what may be called 'atonement' in literature has been won by the reality and importance of the vicarious element in life. The processes of redemption whereby one soul wins another out of danger into safety are yet but partially understood; but it becomes ever more clear that the facility and effectiveness of this process depends in large measure upon a substitutionary effort. The man puts himself in the place of his endangered brother. The chastisement of another's peace is laid

upon him; by his stripes borne willingly and of redemptive purpose his fellow is healed.

Jesus Christ has been and is the great exemplar of this truth. The eminent men from Augustine to Bushnell who dealt with the problem of atonement, inadequate as their treatment was because it was so often mechanical, commercial, or juridical instead of humane with the divine humanity of Jesus, were yet, I believe, nearer right in their estimate of the worth and power of his life and death than those who have dismissed these as of no especial moment to his doctrine or to the world. In a very real sense he has been and remains, not merely a Teacher and a Master, but a Saviour of the sons of men.

CHAPTER VII

IS THERE ANY HOLY GHOST?

SEVERAL years ago I called one day at a hospital upon an acquaintance who had recently met with serious injury. He was a surgeon of considerable skill and provincial repute, sanguine in temperament, bold and confident in habit. His willingness to take risks led to an automobile accident which had caused the death of a mechanic in his employ and the fracture of so many bones in his own big and robust body as to set the recuperative forces of Nature a task apparently beyond their powers. Long after recovery from the immediate shock and the technical knitting of the injured framework, it seemed as though the body would never supply bone-material in quantity sufficient to harden and strengthen the afflicted members to the point of service. It was an exceptional trial of faith, courage, and patience, under which the strong man was brought very low.

On the day of my visit I discovered hanging at the foot of his bed a little card of New Year greeting sent out by the minister of one of the local churches to the families of his flock and entitled 'A Creed for the New Year.' It followed at first the order of the Apostles' Creed with a view to turning its famous phrases into current terms and applying them to the needs of the common day. The injured man was

not a church-goer and under ordinary circumstances might have denied any personal interest in religion; but the long processes of recovery made thought inevitable, and this card, which ordinarily would have been thrown aside, despite his friendly relations with the minister in question, had captured his attention. He spoke about it with an interest that was real, though a little hesitant. Of the first three articles — 'I believe in God the Father' . . . 'I believe in Jesus Christ' . . . 'I believe in the Holy Ghost' . . . he intimated that he could accept the first. As to the second, he was less ready to commit himself. While the third, as I gathered, seemed to fade away into a sort of unreality.

This occurred at a time when I had come through my own struggle with religion far enough to see a practicable way and to win for faith a fairly definite content; and I remember telling him that in my opinion that third seemingly dubious article represented religion's most intimate approach to him; it was the point at which he first met it; and that, if he had any practical religious faith at all, he might be quite sure that he believed in the Holy Ghost. After years of further experience I incline to abide by that pronouncement, and to add that every man who lives long enough to have any vital experience of the distinction between right and wrong or truth and error has so far forth ground for faith in what the Church calls the Holy Ghost.

No doubt many readers of this chapter (should Heaven send it many) will think this statement extreme. Some will differ violently; others will doubt

and question. Probably there is excuse enough, or, as some might prefer to phrase it, cause enough, for this tendency to regard faith in the Holy Ghost as the distant, mystical, and more or less indefinite experience of a few; whereas I steadfastly maintain that it is the one near, intimate, practical, and general experience of the many. So much of breath and ink has been expended upon metaphysical concepts and definitions of the 'Trinity,' and so many really earnest and honest people have prayed and striven for a 'baptism of the Holy Spirit,' that was to be an esoteric, mystic thing, quite remote from the world of ordinary dust and toil, that one does not wonder that the plain man has thought of this whole realm of the really spiritual as something outside his orbit; something possibly to be observed at a distance, believed in and wondered at with the curious awe that might attend his observation of a comet; but not a thing for human nature's daily use 'by sun and candlelight.' I still remember the profound distaste of my boyhood for any one whom I chanced to hear characterized as 'a very spiritual man.' A picture always rose before me of a person of anæmic habit, with flabby muscles covered by needlessly ill-fitting clothes, a man with dubious teeth and more than probably a bad breath, who never thought of catching fish or sailing a boat, and who could not possibly be expected to hit anything at which he might be so ill-advised as to shoot. This was, of course, a pitifully crude and narrow judgment, but there was some excuse for it in a tendency to confound spirituality with a sort of pseudo-

asceticism that let its physical fibre untwist, but retained considerable powers of working its will on others, sometimes by contagious religious excitement and perhaps more often by a sort of intense religious constraint as of groanings that could not be uttered.

As time passed, this childish estimate was revised by deeper experience. Some men appeared who joined indubitable spiritual qualities to sturdy and even athletic physical habits; others who, though athletic enough and pious enough, yet showed very feeble characters; while now and then an illustration offered of the legitimate spiritual appeal of true asceticism; by which I mean not the formal asceticism that is sought as an end, but the locusts and wild honey which are incidental to an absorbing religious task. The Spirit evidently was something more than a power which reft men away from their accustomed occupations into the wilderness; something more than could be evidenced by any manner of dress or speech; something that transcended all shibboleths of sect and that refused to be bound even by creeds and confessions. The current theologies inclined to speak of the Holy Spirit as a Person who had a certain agency in the conversion of individual men, though just where this began or ended it was hard to say. Popular religion of an emotional type seemed to regard this Spirit as the author of religious zeal and the guarantor of Christian assurance. Then there were a considerable group of men — most of them clearly good and sincere men — who were forever looking for what they called 'a second blessing,' which consisted in

such a 'baptism of the Spirit' as would lift them above the common run of Christians, as a member of the Masonic order may be advanced to a superior 'degree,' at the same time enduing them with a peculiar authority and perfecting them in conduct so that they approached, if they did not attain to, an immunity from sin and conceivably from temptation itself. I still remember one or two men for whom this doctrine seemed to have a peculiar fascination. They gave no sign of being puffed up with spiritual pride, seeming to be, indeed, quite humble-minded and as bent on common service as other worthy Christians; but this may have been because they were still seekers of the 'second blessing' and knew not whether it would be granted to them. Yet their attitude of other-worldliness and their tendency to introduce technicalities of phrase and to suggest ranks and degrees of Christian accomplishment always repelled me.

Not thus confined to certain experiences of 'conversion' or 'sanctification'; not thus the author of religious excitement, or the purveyor of religious rank and office was the Spirit of whom the experience of men and my own growing faith seemed to speak. In the Old Testament the writers were always recurring to their sense of God as present and efficient everywhere in his world. The skilled workman, Bezalel, was wise and clever because the Spirit of God dwelt in him. Kings were fit to reign according as they responded to the waiting influence of the same Spirit, and prophets to prophesy according as this Spirit was upon them. Not much is said

about the Spirit in the Old Testament as a part of the Divine Nature, but there is much about him as a manifestation of the Divine Working.[1] Such references agree with the simplicity and common-sense style of Old Testament writing. God appeared to the average Hebrew writer as immanent and executive in his world and all things that came to pass rested, so to speak, in the divine nature.

In the New Testament, and particularly in the Fourth Gospel, this thought of the Spirit as a real and personal presence in the life of the world and at the heart of Christian experience holds a very high place. The critical reader may ask what right I have to assume that the Fourth Gospel reflects the genuine teaching of Jesus and how far I regard it as fundamental for Christian doctrine. This is not the place to open once more the vexed question of the date and authorship of that monumental piece of literature. I may briefly state that, while I do not think it at all impossible that the book should have been the work of John the son of Zebedee, the improbability is so considerable that we should commonly deal with it as though it were another's; and that though the date is by no means so late as it was the fashion to think a few years ago, it is still late enough to separate this Gospel from the Synoptics by an appreciable and important interval. None the less, the book is so early as to have entered into the warp and woof of the life of the young Church and is so clear an exposition of the spirit of Jesus, and, as it

[1] Cf. *The Dynamic of Christianity*, p. 146, by E. M. Chapman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1904.

seems to me, so normal and necessary a development of his doctrine, that if we did not have it we should be driven to assume something equivalent to it before it would become possible to universalize his Gospel or to apply it to the needs of to-day.

The Synoptics give us the incidents of the life and death of Jesus with the setting of his ministry. They record his dealings with his disciples and the people about him; his parables and sermons, most notable of all the Sermon on the Mount. Here are set forth the Jesus of the first century, his proclamation of God's love and man's possible brotherhood, the idea of the Kingdom of God in Heaven and on earth, the vision of judgment to come, with some suggestion of his own work of mediation and sacrifice in translating divine love into human terms, establishing the Blessed Society of the Loyal, and preparing believers for a complete mastery of circumstance in the future; though, as he clearly pointed out, they must expect circumstance to include poverty, persecution, separation from himself, death, and judgment.

The almost inevitable outcome of this teaching was that affectionate and believing men would pin their faith to his personal presence while he remained with them and hark back to that presence after he was gone. The norm and measure of the early Church was bound to be the 'days of his flesh' unless some corrective principle were applied. The life of the Church was bound to be a retrospect rather than an adventure unless some future-regarding element were introduced. These things the Fourth Gospel supplies.

In it two things are set forth that prove to be the truth so far as human experiment has tested them; and human experiment has gone far enough to justify it in more confident assertion and adventure than it has yet undertaken.

The first of these things is that Jesus, in his life, teachings, and death was the Word; that is, a translation of the character and will of God into human terms — a language in which divine truth becomes common earthly goodness and divine goodwill ceases to be an abstract thing of Heaven, and is so clothed upon with an earthly grace of service and sacrifice that the meanest of mankind must recognize something of its appeal.

The second of these things, and the one that especially concerns us here, is the development of the principle of the Spirit. Here the life and work of Jesus in translating the Divine into the human is taken up and universalized; it is made to apply always, everywhere, and to all conditions. The 'flesh' in which Jesus showed himself is recognized to be a necessary means of manifestation; but at the same time it is one of those means which easily become an obstacle to manifestation. Such a means sometimes usurps the place and prerogative of an end. This is what is meant when Jesus is represented as saying, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' Except he did so his disciples would never hear the Divine Word in its fullness because of their attention to his human voice; or heed the opportunities of the future because of their love of dwelling in the past; or prove equal to the tasks of a world because of their

tendency to apply, not a Christian, but merely a Galilean or Nazarene, rule to the measure of its problems.

But if he went, and went as he did go by the path of sacrifice, then the Spirit would come and lead them into all the truth. The more hospitably they received this Spirit, the clearer would be their discernment between true and false, right and wrong; the truer would be their appraisal of the old and the new and the better their judgment as to what to discard as outgrown and what to adopt as ripe for use. The Spirit would keep alive in them forever a true reverence for the Past and a willingness to learn its lessons; but he would with equal certainty deliver them from servitude to the dead hand of the Past. Under the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit the earthly ministry of Jesus himself would appear in its true light and proportion, not as a *terminus ad quem* — a Golden Age to which they were to be always harking back as a model of what should again be — but as a *terminus a quo* or starting-point for the greatest of adventures. This adventure, moreover, was to be in the realm of truth which was to be fearlessly discovered and as rapidly as possible transmuted into goodness. Here the Spirit was to rule as the great Emancipator from fear and Guide to conduct. After his advent no man was to be afraid of discovery in any realm of experience. Every fact, well authenticated and clearly discerned, was to be known as a way-mark of the divine presence; and every such combination and correlation of facts as men agree to call a law, when

well attested and assured by hypothesis, experiment, and common use, was to be welcomed as an avenue of divine power. Such discoveries were bound, of course, to introduce change of view and of habit among believing men. But this was the Spirit's very office 'lest one good custom should corrupt the world.' He would look upon every man, church, and society, and cause each of these to look upon itself, as an organism — a living thing meant for life and growth and able to live only by growth with its accompaniment of change.

Under the Spirit's guidance the believing man of the future was to regard the period of Jesus' residence upon earth as normal for principles, but not for policies. I am aware that this statement will seem dim and vague to some. But let us look at certain concrete problems in the light of it. Here, for instance, is the problem of church organization. What volumes have been written and what clouds of learned dust have been raised over the credentials of the Christian minister and the ordering of the society of believers! Should the Church be episcopal, with bishops set over it, each to be ordained by the laying-on of the hands of his predecessors, thus forming a sacred and inspired succession from the days of the Apostles even until now? Or should it be presbyterian, organized and governed by groups of elder ecclesiastical statesmen? Or should it be democratic and congregational, each individual society of believers ordering its own affairs, calling, and if need be ordaining, its own ministers, and combining with its neighbor churches so far and

only so far as might seem practicable, brotherly, and meet for the general conduct of the business of the Kingdom? Multitudes of good men have enlisted, heart and soul, under the banner of each idea; yes, and fought, too, sometimes with an eagerness that did more credit to their zeal than to their apprehension of their Master's secret and method. Each of these groups, sometimes, though too rarely, heartily coöperating, sometimes living in a sort of armed neutrality, and sometimes competing, has achieved great and lasting results, seemingly sufficient to justify its contention that it was entitled to represent the Head of the Church upon the earth. Each has had its faults and weaknesses, so many of them, indeed, that every individual accusation of the scorner could probably somewhere be justified. Yet all have upon the whole put the general accusations of the scorners to shame by an age-long zeal for righteousness and a measure of sacrifice for it that have moulded the lives of a multitude of societies as well as of individuals to blessed ends. They have endured in spite of persecution that has threatened extinction, indifference that has seemed to portend utter neglect, and an occasional prosperity that has invited spiritual pride and mental or physical sloth. They have shown a considerable capacity for conviction of their own sins, for repentance and reformation, and the impulse to these things has come generally from within and not from without. Reformation imposed by the State, though often needed, has usually gone for little. Revival of faith from within accompanied by a breaking-up of the great

deeps of devotion and the release of beneficent energies has been almost normal to the history of the Church; and curiously enough this has been true of all its great branches governed in these differing ways.

The onlooker might well ask why this continued life, and especially why these evident renewals of life, should not have indicated which form of organization had the sanction of the Church's Founder. Each has appealed to the Time of Christ and the Age of the Apostles to validate its special forms. The changes have been rung upon *episcopos*, *presbuteros*, and *ecclesia*, until the ears of men were deafened with the tumult and most of them refused to listen longer. By degrees the plain sense of mankind has come to see, what the enlightened wisdom of the Church ought to have taught long ago, that these things are outside the range of Scripture. Here the Church has fallen into the snare that Jesus saw spread before the feet of his disciples. What did he say? What did he ordain? Thus good men have questioned. And the answer is that it was expedient for him to go away, leaving to the world certain divine principles translated into human terms, illustrated and made efficient by his sacrifice, in order that these might be applied to the problems of every age through men enlightened by the Spirit.

Such questions as the form of Church organization are left to the wisdom of men of good will. They are beyond the realm of authority. The fact that the early Church governed itself after an episcopal or a congregational form may be an interesting and

valuable datum upon which to build later conclusions. But it orders and ordains nothing. If it were never so clearly shown that the Church of the first century was presbyterian, it would not for a moment prove that it was not intended to become congregational or episcopalian in the twentieth century. The Church was organized for growth, and every discovery of honest men under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth is a revelation which they have a right to incorporate into the body of their faith and practice.

Here again is the matter of Sunday observance. It is a mistake to suppose that all rigid Sabbatarians are jealous of the liberties that some would claim in the use and abuse of the day. Many of them are generous and gracious people; but they have a sense of concern lest in permitting a less strict observance of Sunday they should be disobedient to a command of their Master, and at the same time throw away what they believe to be an inestimable privilege. The Sunday of rest and worship has in my own view abundantly justified itself in the deepening of character, the strengthening of family ties, and the nurture of the life of the Spirit; and any turning of it into a day of hurried pursuit of recreation or gain on the one hand or of mere 'loafing' on the other is bound to mean serious loss. But the use of the first day of the week is not to be dogmatically determined either by quoting the twentieth chapter of Exodus or by reference to the sabbath excursion of Jesus and his disciples through the grainfield. His great principles of good-will and service pushed to

the point of sacrifice apply; and so does the regnant and abiding principle of the presence of the Spirit of Righteousness in the world, who will not fail honest people bent on doing right. To these, trying to read the lessons of the past and the needs of the present in the light of brotherly love, the secret of wise Sunday legislation, if legislation be needed, will finally be shown. And their search, even in its possible mistakes of experiment, will be eminently Christian.

Still further, one might cite the ever-vexed question of divorce. Some good people will doubtless think that it is dangerous to apply this principle of the Spirit here. To whom I would make answer that it is dangerous not to do so. Christian life is of necessity an adventurous, outreaching thing; risk is inherent in it; but its very mistakes, when made in the pursuit of high ends and in the exercise of honest brotherliness, are more fruitful than the caution of fear. In the realm of ethics as truly as in that of physical science the way into all truth along which Jesus said the Spirit was to guide us appears to be very often a way of hypothesis and experiment. Policies may very well fluctuate and change; it is the principle of reverence for truth and of good-will reaching to the point of sacrifice that is constant.

So in this specific case, those who would regard a passing remark of Jesus upon divorce conditions in his day as laying down a hard-and-fast rule for twentieth-century legislation upon family life fall into the pit which Jesus saw his physical presence was digging for the disciples. There was need of

better justice between man and man then; but when he was summoned to decide a case of disputed inheritance, he put the summons by as quite beside the main purpose of his mission. 'Who made me a judge and a divider over you?' he asked with something like indignation. He laid down principles of devotion, honor, and purity of heart that were for the guidance of all time. But there is little to show that he had any thought of binding the divorce legislation of future ages by the concrete comment of one day. The proper legal control of marriage and divorce was a matter to which right-minded men should finally attain under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth if they sought honestly. It is not an easy goal to reach. It has never been a fixed goal; and it may not be for many generations. Yet some things grow clear. It is scarcely in the interests of the Kingdom of God that either men or women should be kept legally bound in chains that are clearly those of cruelty and tyranny, unless adultery can be proved against them or deliberately committed by them for the sake of freedom; though it may very well be that complete freedom to marry again should not be granted even to those who have good grounds for separation until a considerable time at least shall have elapsed. On the other side it would seem equally clear that it cannot benefit either God or man to adopt the cheap and easy promiscuity lately advocated by Mr. Dreiser who would appear to bring the whole matter for decision to the bar of his own somewhat amorous 'temperament.' It is not true that Christianity is or ever was

an ascetic religion or that it encourages a moral code that is primarily repressive; but it is eminently true that it is a religion of honor, justice, and good-will, and that a self-control sufficient to harness instinct and guide it to the attainment of these ends is fundamental to it. None need fear lest the doctrine of the Spirit here set forth will throw open the floodgates of passion or make life a plaything of conflicting whims. The more intimate we become with the secret and method of Jesus and the more rigorously we strive to see the truth as the Spirit reveals it to us, the clearer the sense of sin and the need of some genuine redemption are likely to become. This redemption waits for the individual and the society that will claim it; but the way to its attainment will never be pointed out by the apostles of 'temperament'; and in its heart the seemingly careless world knows very well the distinction between the voice of the Spirit reasoning of sin, righteousness, and judgment and that of the pornographic 'realist' exploiting sex for fame and pelf.

One further illustration may be given at this point of my reason for thinking the Holy Spirit to be a reality for faith and life; and for thinking both faith and life to stand in need of the Spirit's guidance. Let us take the case of the professional reformer or 'philanthropist.' Why is he so generally regarded as unlovely and repellent? Partly, no doubt, because he often makes men uncomfortable by setting them face to face with their own sins; but quite as often because he is so inclined to use some isolated and specific word of Jesus or ordinance of religion to

bludgeon his fellows into virtue. Such men have a genius for forgetting the great principles of Jesus while insisting that their especial policies are the only ones worthy to bear his name. They ignore the fact that Jesus, while insistent upon principles, seemed very lenient and catholic in his attitude toward ways and means. The former he would establish for all time; the latter he would freely leave to the wisdom and good judgment of open-minded men enlisted in the service of the Spirit of Truth.

To take a difficult instance, here is the extreme 'pacifist,' so-called. He conceives Jesus to have said one thing, 'Resist not evil'; and apparently one thing only. And this one thing he appears to regard as having an exclusively physical bearing, since he is often a violent and particularly waspish denouncer of those whose views differ from his own. I have called his case difficult because one would wish to treat with all respect and friendliness those conscientious objectors to police and war service who feel themselves in the grip of a mighty conviction for which they must witness and if need be suffer; and I am as far as possible from condoning the brutal treatment to which conscientious objectors have sometimes been subjected. None the less, the fact stands that we are not at liberty to distort the teaching of Jesus after this fashion. He was not here to bind us with injunctions, but to enlighten and inspire us with principles of thought and conduct capable of an infinite variety of applications to a developing life. The 'pacifist' who would carry this

one injunction to an extreme, as though there were no Golden Rule by which all things must be measured or as though there had never been any whip of small cords for the confusion of the money-changers in the temple, if he were quite consistent, would find himself inhibited from remonstrating against war itself, since his prophesyings and passivities are really resistance of a most pronounced kind. He does violence to his own creed here.

But his primary mistake lies in his contempt for the patience with which the Spirit of Truth deals with men. He is often inhumane with that philanthropic inhumanity which loves the world at large so well as to ignore the man at hand, and is so rapt in a vision as to miss a task. He is in danger, too, of yielding so much loyalty to a single precept as to miss the service of a great principle. Such a man not infrequently reminds me of a famous actor who took pride in his yacht, but was the bane of his captains or sailing masters. One of these confided in me that in the days before auxiliary power was common, his employer, after giving directions to make a certain near-by port, went below. The wind came off shore and the crew bent their energies to beating into harbor. While standing off on one tack, everything taut and pulling, the owner came on deck. His wonder, at finding his yacht several points from her expected and desired course, quickly changed to wrath and the wrath was so eloquent that his sailing master in despair at such mingled ignorance and impracticability severed their connection at once. The doctrine of complete non-resistance is comparable

to the actor's seamanship that would have held a vessel's head in the wind and expected her to make progress. To do otherwise, I shall be told, would be to compromise with evil. There is no compromise with evil in such use of ordinary, recognized human circumstance as shall make it serve the common weal in the solution of a given problem and the attainment of a desirable goal. Human progress is often a story of beating up against the winds of apparent destiny, making gain not only in spite of but by means of the things that seem bent upon thwarting us. This it is that demonstrates man's lordship over his world and exhibits the image of God in him.

Tolstoi was an apostle of the truth; but he might have been a more efficient one had he not let his mercy toward men at large involve pretty practical cruelty toward some people at home. Wendell Phillips was a reformer of great eloquence and considerable effectiveness; but his love for the slave gained little in efficiency and less in grace from his scathing denunciation of opponents or from a public cursing of his native State of Massachusetts. The temperance vials of wrath poured upon brewers and bar-tenders by the average temperance orator often please his audience better than a reasoned setting-forth of the menace to human wealth, nerves, morals, and general peace caused by alcoholic disease; yet it is the audience convinced that general traffic in alcoholic drink is to be resisted on the principle of public quarantine, as the purveyor of disease sometimes violent and sometimes insidious, but always dangerous, that the brewer and bar-tender have genuine cause to fear.

So when the pacifist or the socialist in his most truculent accents reminds the Christian that Jesus said 'Resist not evil,' and is answered that Jesus also bade us do to others as we would have them do to us, he loves to abuse his opponent as a trimmer and a mere juggler with words. But the abused man can afford to hold his ground. If he be a true man, he will certainly desire that strong hands of restraint be laid upon himself should he ever, when beside himself through anger, lust, drug, or disease, threaten violence to others. He would wish them to be merciful hands controlled by social good-will, but he would, if he be man enough, desire them to go so far as to deprive him of liberty and even life itself if it were needful to keep him from irreparable outrage and crime. This is no juggling with words. It is a fact of human experience directly cognate to the divine good-will of Jesus himself, and the man who strives to interpret it into terms of life is aligning himself with the purpose and endeavor of the Spirit. The pacifist and the socialist may still have much to teach him; but it must be in other ways than those in which during the Great War they scoffed and railed at their fellows who were struggling and dying for what they verily believed to be a worthy cause. The sacrificial effort to save one's best from destruction, outrage, and tyrannous overlordship, or to redeem those who have been outraged from deceit and violence, when the sacrifice is undertaken in an honest spirit of good-will toward the world to which one's immediate duty seems to be owed, may sometimes be ignorant and mistaken, but it is not es-

sentially unchristian. The pacifist and the socialist may be lords of the future — some of their principles I certainly hope may prevail — but they are likely to find themselves farther from the Kingdom of God than many of the objects of their scorn until they learn first that no one precept of conduct can be reft away from its fellows and used as a bludgeon to drive men into a made-to-order heaven; and secondly, that the Spirit of God is very patient toward men of good will and purpose even in their mistakes; but that it is hard for Him to use any man, be his platform and programme never so perfect, whose railing tongue proclaims a bitter heart.

It will be objected that this is altogether to secularize religion and to remove the seat of authority from Heaven to earth. I answer that the whole purport of the life and sacrifice of Jesus was to teach a fundamental unity of life and love in Heaven and on earth. Man was made in the image of God. He was competent to think God's thoughts after him. He was son and heir to God. Moreover, Jesus, who had come to reveal the Power that makes for righteousness, love, and human salvation, chose to call himself the Son of Man, as though it were a term of utmost distinction. And when in the Fourth Gospel he is represented as telling his disciples of a Divine Presence which shall be with them always, making them love truth and feed upon it, he is simply perfecting his doctrine. He is not secularizing Heaven, but divinizing earth. Thus the Word is still becoming flesh and dwelling among us whenever men take the principles of Jesus and apply them to the

problems of common life with a view to the development of policies that shall be more just, generous, and expressive of practical good-will than the policies that had gone before.

Then, too, the Spirit is that Presence of the Divine which makes all truth sacred, and which objects to a distinction between different kinds of truth as though some were common and unclean while others were peculiarly holy. We shall recur to this whole matter with practical illustrations of its meaning and importance in a later chapter. It has a bearing of great moment upon the so-called 'conflict of science and religion' with which judicious ears were so teased a generation ago. The clamor was peculiarly trying, not only because of the feeling that was roused upon both sides of the question — a feeling that tended to compromise the dignity of science as well as the good-will of religion — but because of an uneasy half-consciousness on both sides that there was really nothing to fight about; and that if all were known all would be forgiven. The demand of the Fourth Gospel and the claim of Jesus as voiced in the doctrine of the Spirit is that all shall be known; and that every avenue to knowledge when travelled by men of good will bent on perfecting the revelation of truth becomes at once a Sacred Way.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH AND ITS CLAIMS

I HAVE intimated in an earlier chapter that in 'joining the church' in boyhood a considerable influence was exerted by the fact that my parents and grandparents already belonged to it. The Church appeared to be a sort of family of those who believed and were saved in believing. This belief I had reason to think sincere so far as there was ordinary opportunity for testing it. But the Church was never represented to me as requiring or expecting complete identity of faith in its members. Sufficient similarity or likeness in substance of doctrine so that believers might live, worship, and work together was all that seemed to be needed. It is somewhat difficult to define exactly the attitude of these early days; because the question of belief really scarce arose above the horizon and it is easy to read back into it the feeling of a later time when it thrust itself sharply forward. It would be fair to say, however, that I approached the Church, rather careless of what it believed, but very much interested in what it was.

But if it were a family of those who believed approximately the same things — a fact which I was ready to take for granted and did not greatly concern myself about — it was also a family of those who were being saved; and this concerned me very much. I had never defined salvation to myself with the least exactness; but I had a concern about death;

some concern about sin, though it was by no means overpowering; considerable concern about Hell so far as any idea of future punishment had been permitted to form itself in my mind; and a rather poignant concern about being out of relation to the whole of things around me, though of course I never phrased it thus at that time.

In this complex of ideas and experiences where I so often felt puzzled and lost, my friends seemed confident and saved. Furthermore, this confidence was one of quietness and calmness rather than of self-assurance and bravado — a distinction that a fairly mature child was quite capable of making. If they had been cock-sure about everything on the one hand, or contemptuous of some of these problems that loomed so large to me on the other, I should have been less impressed. But they were not. They recognized the fact of death as clearly as I did, and on the rare occasions when any discussion of it arose, they were quite ready to admit that it was natural for everybody, even the most implicit believer, to shrink from the experience of it. My father often quoted the remark of a good man who said that he was afraid to die, but not at all afraid to be dead. They believed in future punishment, but were very undogmatic in their references to Hell, and, to our occasional disappointment, never arrogated to themselves any authority to assign this or that person, however notoriously bad, to residence there. They recognized the fact of sin and spoke upon occasion of their own shortcoming or imperfection; and while I recognized that imperfection in them, it seemed to

me that they had gained the upper hand of sin and kept it. There were realms of possible experience toward which my eager questions pressed that they admitted to be beyond them, telling me that they did not know, that perhaps no one but God knew; but even this unknown country whose possibilities so often filled me with anxiety seemed to have no power to daunt them. Not that they were indifferent to life's vexations; indeed, the minor contradictions of which we children supplied our full share were sometimes sufficient to mar their peace; but I knew and took comfort in the knowledge that the peace would return. They were like the sea-craft that I admired so much, occasionally bothered among the shallows and cross-currents along shore, but nobly competent for the deeps.

Further experience has confirmed me in the faith that the idea of those early days, childish though it was in some respects, is not only essentially true, but is fundamental to a right estimate of the place and claim of the Church in the world. Man is a gregarious animal who has not only an instinct for his kind, but a further instinct for organizing and developing his kind, thus making it permanent and efficient. Jesus worked with this instinct when he gathered and taught a company of disciples, implanted in them the seeds of an undying loyalty, and sent them out to be exemplars, imperfect, indeed, but still true apostles and teachers of the Gospel. They were loyal, not merely in the degree in which they remembered him and his precepts or tried to reproduce the conditions of his earthly life, but particularly in

so far as they yielded themselves to the daily guidance of the Spirit, and applied the secret and method of Jesus to the conquest of circumstance. This sounds general and vague; but in its application it became most definite and particular. The pious Jew had pinned his hope of spiritual welfare to a keeping of the ceremonial law. The Christian under the guidance of the Spirit of Jesus slowly and somewhat painfully came to see that so far as the formal law had real ethical content it was to be observed, but that beyond this he and his fellows were free to regulate their conduct by mutual agreement at the dictates of good-will. The Gentile found himself to be part of a world that was selfishly and often cruelly organized. Idolatry was rampant, slavery general, fornication so common as scarce to excite remark, and baser vices seriously frequent. The Spirit bade him set his face against the wrong festering in all these practices, to strive to abolish them where they were intrinsically evil, and to reform them where they were capable of reformation. In the strength of the Spirit the Christian was to conquer the world. According to the degree of his faith and loyalty he did this thing. Sometimes it was by sheer innocence and grace of a humble life, which rose so fragrant and beautiful from mean surroundings that the evil world felt itself put to shame. Again, it was by a severity of rebuke that in itself may have seemed to be little in accord with the manner of Jesus, as in Stephen's case; but that was so offset by a spirit of forgiveness and patience as to leave an indelible impression upon the witnesses. Still again, it may

have been by some half-fanatical act of self-immolation, as when Telemachus threw himself into the arena to sheathe the gladiators' swords in his own flesh rather than have them fight each other for a cruel people's play; and most often of all, probably, it was by the patient preaching and teaching of missionaries, pastors, and parents, all proving to be generally efficient in proportion to their loyalty.

These people belonged together. They sought each other for mutual fellowship and counsel as the like-minded always do. They found rest in one another's sympathy; strength in one another's prayers and experiences. There is little sign that they united with one another of set purpose to become a depository of a system of truth, or to exercise a spiritual and ethical authority, or to dictate times and ways of worship. They were, to be sure, bent on doing good; but there is little to show that they had any purpose to develop a purely ecclesiastical system of teaching or of charity. Those of Jewish origin had been used to a theocratic government; but the early Christians showed no ambition to supersede the regularly constituted secular governments. They wished, indeed, to convert them into the kingdoms of their God and of his Christ, but that meant their guidance and inspiration by the Spirit rather than a subjection of their methods and powers to the authority of the Church.

But here as elsewhere in life the Principle of the Crust applied. The organism which at first had been plastic and quickly adaptable to the changing need of the day, developed a sort of shell of law and

custom; and further, from being mainly conscious of its mission it grew to be mainly conscious of itself, ambitious of its own behalf, and fond of authority as an end. It is customary for critics of the Church to denounce all this as an utter departure from the high purpose of the first believers and a sort of apostasy from the faith that Christ delivered; but it is quite possible to go too far along the easy path of denunciation. The Principle of the Crust involves, as in the baking of a loaf, not the hardening of extraneous material applied from without, but the callusing of the wholesome loaf itself from exposure to a process meant to fit it the better for use. It is perhaps inevitable, and in moderate degree it is neither distasteful nor unwholesome. But this need not further detain us now.

What particularly concerns us here is the matter of the claims which the association of believers gradually came to advance for itself. It became the custodian of a faith which was treated as a deposit. This faith it guarded, defined, and attempted to hand on to all time as exactly representing the faith once delivered to the saints. The reader will think the conclusion that in doing this the Church was both right and wrong to be very lame and impotent. But here again we must face the truth even when it forces us to be charitable and deprives us of the pleasure of wholesale denunciation. The company of believers called the Church *was* in some sense the custodian of the faith; these believers *were* expected to guard, define, and propagate the faith once delivered to the saints; but not as a deposit — not as

something complete and determined for all time. This treasure was a growing thing forever in process of reproduction and becoming. In each generation the Church was asked, indeed, to conserve the old, but to cast it fearlessly into the field of its own day's experience, quite confident that all that was true in it, so far from suffering loss, was bound to be renewed and reproduced. It was asked to define the faith, but in the light of recent as well as ancient experience. It was to propagate the faith, not only as a faith once delivered to the saints, but as a faith still in process of delivery to believing men, hoping, moreover, with an expectation that has been a thousand times realized, for a fruitful reaction of the experience of the missionary field upon the faith and order of the home church.

This call the Church has only partially heeded; and this in turn because it has only partially apprehended it. There is a vain tradition that when Jesus left the disciples on the shoulder of Olivet, he left too the imprint of his foot in the limestone, and there to this day multitudes of pilgrims behold it. On the other side of Jerusalem and at about the same distance from it there were, just before the Great War and doubtless are to-day, two hospitals, one, the Ophthalmic, for treatment of the frequent diseases of the eyes, and the other, the *Jesus Hilfe*, for the care of lepers. The pilgrims who visit these see a far more convincing evidence of their Master's presence than the rude footprint in the rock can show. Yet the impress in the rock attracts many while the hospital visitors are few.

So in matters of faith and conduct the Church has too often fixed its eyes so intently upon the literal word or the specific deed of Jesus in the first century as to miss the plain meaning of his Spirit in a later time. 'What would Jesus do' has been urged upon Christians as the test of conduct, and rightly enough, except that the tendency of those who urged it has too often been to thrust the whole problem under discussion back into the relations of other days. What Saint Peter or Saint Paul believed does not necessarily delimit the boundaries of Christian faith to-day because so many centuries of continued revelation have intervened. These later revelations sometimes seem commonplace beside the earlier just as the hospitals seem less romantic than the foot-print in the rock. The later revelations, too, seem less mysterious and awe-inspiring because we have seen more of their processes and prefer to call them discoveries; forgetting that every discovery animated by the love of truth becomes a revelation of the divine nature and a lending to men of God's power. *Ubi Spiritus, ibi Ecclesia,* said the old Latin Father. Wherever the Spirit of Truth is, there the elements of the true Church are present waiting to be organized into a household of faith. Half if not three fourths of the futile disputings between 'Science' and 'Religion' might have been avoided if faithful men had possessed faith enough to believe that the promise of a Spirit to lead them into all the truth meant what it said. They have tried too often to shut this promise up to the revelation of 'religious' or 'spiritual' truth. The true message of the Church is

that all truth is religious and spiritual. It reveals God and is capable of enhancing goodness. Man has an appetite for it akin to his hunger for God Himself; his mind is restless till it knows the truth just as his heart is restless till it loves God.

This will serve to indicate my feeling that the Church has been often wrong in the discharge of its trusteeship as a custodian of truth. Truth is not a thing to be watched and guarded from assault so much as it is a talent to be put out freely into the current of the world's affairs that it may multiply itself. Where the Church has feared lest recognized truth should suffer from contact with the world's rough life, or where it has been suspicious of the increase which has come out of this lending of truth in the world's market-places, it has met deserved loss in the estimate of men and in influence over them. The claim has fortunately always been disputed in the Church itself and the loss has been therefore but partial. Yet it has none the less been real.

A second claim closely cognate to the first has been a claim to define belief and to prescribe the exact contents of faith. This has issued in the great historic creeds which will presently be discussed by themselves, and in the development of various 'systems' of theology aiming to set forth man's relation to God and God's devices and schemes for saving man. The claim has always had in it an element of the grotesque, and it was always open to the scoffer to put to its defender the question of the Book of Job; 'Canst thou by searching find out

God?' A world that loves to heckle its religious leaders has hastily jumped to the conclusion that because this question so often produced some confusion, it was therefore conclusive in putting the theologian to shame and making him a fair object of ridicule. And here the world falls into just the pit which it has so joyously digged for the Church. The Church has sometimes falsely reasoned that since religious faith is good and instructed religious faith is better, therefore completely defined and ordained faith must be best. The theologian has more often falsely reasoned that since thought upon religious phenomena is good and reasoned or systematic thought is better, therefore a system which shall be closed and perfected must be best. Both might make out their case if they could show that the phenomena at their disposal were sufficient for their purpose. But the fact is that after their stock of revelation and experience has been exhausted, gaps remain in creed and system. To leave them offends the artistic sense of the creed-and-system-maker. Hence it follows that additions are quite naturally made to creed and system; no longer, however, so much for the sake of the disciple and questioner as for the sake of creed or system itself in the interest of symmetry.

This is so frequent and in many respects so venial a fault and one, moreover, so congenial to the world's own habit, that, if toleration were a worldly virtue, as it generally is not, one might ask the world in all fairness to deal more gently with the mistake of Church and theologian here. Men will believe, and so long as men believe we shall have creeds. Men,

with some seeming and notable exceptions, are ineradicably disposed to think, and so long as they think upon religion, there will be theologians; and, what is more, many of these theologians will win and hold the ear of multitudes whether their attitude be that of Mr. Moody or of Colonel Ingersoll, of Cardinal Newman or of Professor Huxley. Mr. Chesterton would lose half his Gargantuan grace and Mr. Bernard Shaw at least a third of his Mephistophelian charm if it were not that people feel in them a certain exploitation of orthodoxy and heresy. Under these circumstances the creed-builder and the theologian have no need to apologize for their callings or to fear lest these should ever fail them; and he who laughs at them had better do so while he can, since his laugh is likely to be neither last nor best.

The Church is right in having creeds and theologies, and in promulgating them. But its claim that they are sacrosanct and complete is the claim which I have been compelled by experience to deny. It is a claim born of fear rather than of faith, since fear strives to keep the present deposit intact lest it suffer evil, while faith is assured that truth not only is never permanently confused by experience, but must gain from it in both content and efficacy.

A variant of this same claim appears in the assumption by some churches of exclusive possession of the notes of the true Church. God speaks many languages. His children reach the vision of his face by varied experiences; and these experiences are bound to indicate a variety of expression in worship,

ordinance, and organization. We must recognize soon or late that no one order of service can be expected to interpret the needs of all men equally well. Some will desire a liturgy, responding to the appeal of good order in the conduct of worship, to a generous measure of symbolism, and to a sense of continuity with men of other times. Others will just as certainly feel cramped and hampered by these good things and crave the spontaneity of free prayer with the variety and naturalness of informal worship. It is beside the mark that both of these methods may conceivably harden into mere formalism. As mere forms some will still find one less distressing than the other; and the deadness of both will be revived when the tides of the Spirit flow through them.

But the claim of either to an exclusive worth or right to the Christian name is an offence which must eventually prove to be a source of serious weakness. I shall venture upon an illustration here. My boyhood was closely associated with the Congregational Church, as has been told in an earlier chapter; while many of my school associations brought me into touch with the Episcopalians. There was never any question of my fundamental loyalty to the church of my birth and upbringing; but as life developed it was natural enough that I should be disposed to see the defects in what I had and the excellencies of the other side of the way. I was deeply attached to my headmaster, a former rector of the Episcopal parish; his sturdy faith and plain-spoken exposition of the Bible in the daily school worship appealed to me; so

did the services of the Episcopal Church itself on the occasions — not very infrequent ones — when I went there; and I was by no means indifferent to the historical ties of faith and worship that bound this service to the faith and worship of the Mother Country that I loved next to my own. It would have been easy for me to have found a home within that communion had I been separated from my own by change of residence; and when travelling in other countries I have probably worshipped with Episcopalians more often than with any other body of Christians. Clergy and laity both have furnished some of my most honored and best-beloved friends.

But one bar completely blocked the way into full communication with this honorable body of Christians. Their use of the words 'Church' and 'Churchman' as though they and none other had any right to them was from the beginning hopelessly repellent to me. It was not difficult to make allowance for the occasional conscientious devotee of the doctrine of apostolic succession; and the yet more occasional foolish person — generally a woman — who spoke of 'dissenters' as though oblivious of the fact that the only established church known to that part of New England had not been episcopal, could be dismissed with a smile; it was merely 'pretty Fanny's way.' But I was constantly faced with the fact that too often the words were used as a challenge and sometimes as a taunt. I cared too heartily for this church and these people to permit this practice to arouse much bitterness in me, but in one man whom I later came to know — a man of outstanding

ability and deep religious feeling with a natural gift for just that aspect of worship and church organization that the Episcopalians have developed most effectively — the bitterness was so marked that I never willingly discussed with him any matter relating to that communion. It would be easy, but it would also seem ungracious, to emphasize the tendency of this branch of the Church in receiving persons who had belonged to other communions to ignore their previous relationship, refusing often even to notify the proper officer of the church which had granted them dismission. It was difficult under such circumstances to observe punctiliously the forms of courtesy knowing that they would be treated with apparent contempt. I say 'apparent contempt' because many of the clergy were generous men whose personal good-breeding made them uncomfortable under this order of things and in an extra-official way they were sometimes able to repair the damage done to Christian comity.

The objection may be raised that the claim on the part of this one communion to be the Church, and its practice of officially ignoring the validity of all the ecclesiastical acts of other communions, was not of choice but of necessity; that consistency and conscience rather than lack of good-breeding lay at the basis of it. That this was so in many instances I willingly acknowledge; but the fact only goes to show how hard and barren a thing mere consistency may be and how much all men need spiritually enlightened consciences. Here is a branch of the Church, lofty in its ideals, notable for its organiza-

tion, its polity, its service to Christian education, and its missionary endeavor, inexpressibly rich in its roll of great names among both clergy and laity and in its contributions to the literature of the Spirit, making a claim to distinction that is essentially belittling because it indicates a thought about itself rather than about its mission. It is a claim that rests upon a form rather than upon a vital reality. The reality is suggested by the old *Ubi Spiritus, ibi Ecclesia.* Measured by that standard it is indubitably a church; but in the minds of most candid and generous Christians it diminishes its title to that name and office by so much as it founds this claim upon formal episcopal succession and strives to maintain it by ignoring the evident presence of the Spirit in those other branches of the Church which it loves to call 'sects.' In face of this attitude the smaller men in these other communions have often felt aggrieved and inclined to meet contempt with contumely; the larger have been wont to smile and to say as little as might be; while the pity of it all remained.

A final and quite natural claim that I have felt forced to observe and to deny is that by which the Church, like a too anxious mother, would fain keep its children in leading-strings after they were meant to illustrate the spirit rather than depend upon the letter of its teaching.

There was a time in early manhood when I remember feeling that all institutions of general benevolence, like hospitals and organizations for the relief of poverty or for social uplift, which so often

owe their inception to the Church, should continue under ecclesiastical control; and that there was substantial loss to the prestige of the Church on the one hand and to the idealism and spiritual power of these organizations on the other, when they set up for themselves and apparently lived an independent life. Among the multitude of foolish things said concerning the Great War the reader will remember the frequent cry that the churches had broken down and that Christianity had gone bankrupt. Why? Because, among other things, welfare agencies like the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Salvation Army, and most notably the Red Cross were doing so much and doing it so directly, while the churches as specific societies seemed to be accomplishing so little. The implication was that these agencies were so independent of organized Christianity that what they did had no vital relation to the life of the Church itself; and that, even though they might in some sense once have been children of the Church or have owed their origin to its teaching, it argued a lamentable feebleness on the part of the Church itself that it should have permitted them thus to escape from its household and set up for themselves.

Again, those who love to let their criticism expose the unreal, but have little appetite for substantiating the real, indulged in hysterical outbursts against the Church because it either did not have power to countermand the summons to arms, or having that power did not arbitrarily use it. Both these Jeremiads were, however, beside the mark, and the critics

would have done better to seek more valid objects of castigation of which the Church unquestionably has a full supply. The Church may be said generally to be wrong when it tries to keep its specific agencies for material relief indefinitely under its own control. It is generally wrong when, after founding schools and colleges, it aims at giving to these a permanently ecclesiastical character. It is generally wrong when it grows so ambitious of temporal power that it yearns to dictate the policies instead of inspiring the life of free peoples. It is worth while to point out that, though the world scold never so shrewdly, she still has instant recourse to the Church so soon as real need arises for rousing interest in good causes, developing plans for relief of the needy, or founding schools and colleges. There was probably never a time in the history of America when Christian churches were called upon to sponsor by appeal, instruction, and financial aid so many and so diverse causes concerned with public welfare; nor was there ever a time when so generous a response was made; although it may well be questioned whether the response is always as wise as it has been generous, because of late there has been a tendency to turn the efforts of the Church so largely into 'practical' channels that the work of instruction and inspiration — the preaching of a gospel of Grace — has been in danger of neglect; and to neglect this is to dry up the sources of supply.

The true claim of the Church here should be to take as its own the task of Virgil's bees. *Sic vos non vobis,* exclaimed the poet watching the workers

storing honey for others; 'So you labor, not for yourselves.' It has been the lot of the Church to found a multitude of the most famous institutions of learning in Europe and America, and a far greater multitude of lesser schools that touch the people more directly. This work still goes on generation after generation. College and school grow into maturity. It is best that they should have their own boards of trustees and their own corporate existence. It is best that they should be free of 'denominational' control; and so, sometimes doubtfully and sometimes magnanimously, the Church withdraws, leaving the fruit of its gifts, care, and labor to serve its own and succeeding generations. The world at large rejoices at the separation, accepts the service as a matter of course, and derides the feebleness of hand that could not hold for the Church that which the Church had begun. Meanwhile, the Church, either officially or through the agency of men whom she has trained and inspired, is repeating her service in some other form.

So in respect of her influence upon affairs of state, it is not to be desired that the Church should dictate or try to dictate national policies. When it has assumed the reins of administration, it has generally been to the loss rather than the gain of good government, and distinctly to the hardening and coarsening of the Church's own fibre. Not for this task was it called; but rather for the instruction and inspiration of national life in such degree that it shall nobly exercise its own natural functions. There will be times, of course, when the Church will be called

upon to rebuke specific wrongs, as in the case of the American Senate's contemptuous treatment of the League of Nations; but here the thing to be dealt with is not the precise governmental policy to be adopted so much as it is the cynicism and brutality that could lead a handful of men possessing immense power to play politics with the hope and sorrow of the world.[1]

In short, wherever the claims of the Church have been claims of authority over the range of men's minds, the exact content of their faith, the precise form of their worship, or the agencies through which they teach their children and direct their activities of benevolence; or where it has arrogated to itself a dominant partnership in the conduct of public affairs, domestic or international, it has suffered in its inner life and finally in the estimation of discerning men by so much as it has succeeded in apparently substantiating those claims. But wherever it has remained true to its mission of gathering together the company of loyal and believing people, learning from their experience, teaching the results to others, discerning the spiritual significance of newly discovered truth, and through the power of the Spirit of Truth stimulating its translation into goodness, there it has always justified itself whether the world would hear or forbear. Fortunately for itself, and, as I have been forced to believe, for the world, this latter ideal of service rather than of authority has

[1] The reader is asked to notice that this is not so much a criticism of the *action* of the Senate, upon which the writer claims no special charter to pass judgment in this place, as of the apparently cynical indifference to great issues that accompanied it.

never been lost sight of even when most neglected; and from it has issued that measure of power which the world at large recognizes and, though suspiciously and grudgingly, still respects.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH AND ITS HISTORY

There has been frequent occasion in the previous pages to refer to the true function of criticism. This it will be remembered is not only to expose falsehood, but to exhibit and reaffirm the truth. There is something in us all when we turn critics that seems to make the former task more congenial than the latter; and when the 'literary man' becomes an historical or ecclesiastical critic, the tendency is generally accentuated. For example, we often hear great episodes of church history, like the formulation of the creeds, the founding and growth of the monastic orders, the exercise of temporal power by bishops and popes, the Reformation, and the theological systems of Protestantism that grew out of it, all discussed and weighed from evidence furnished by the period of their decline rather than by that of their growth. It would seem that the doctrine of development, which has so generally ruled the scientific mind for the past two generations, might have made us more charitable. But no. The confessed evolutionist is often inclined to give the ladder by which he has climbed a peculiarly vicious kick as he overturns it. And the extreme sectarian or partisan usually stands ready to second him with reference to all of the past that does not happen to fit in with his pet scheme for the present. Both, when they write history, prefer, like

Gibbon, to depict decline and fall, to point out corruption, to elaborate senility in the experiences through which bygone men and institutions have passed.

As a Protestant of Puritan ancestry I have approached the Church with my full share of limitation and prejudice. Yet no mistake could be greater than to suppose that the attitude of my family toward other churches than their own was one of mere narrowness or bigotry. The impression that I gained from my parents was that they were always pleased when some man in a church other than our own showed himself to be a real interpreter of truth and a genuine leader toward the light. They might be critical of a very high doctrine of the sacraments, more critical of ritual, and most averse of all from the Roman Catholic teaching and worship, which to them would have represented a well-defined danger had one of their children been attracted thereto. But they were quick to respect and to teach us to respect the note of true Christian living wherever found, and it was a generous rather than a grudging testimony that they bore to the indubitable existence of honest discipleship in all denominations and churches; though they very likely would have wished to assure me that the good seed had more thorns waiting to choke it in other communions than in our own. They would gladly have admitted that God is a good linguist understanding many forms of address; but that our own worship was most likely to be seemly and acceptable if rendered in the form and speech to which we had been bred.

I still think this to be good doctrine; and as time has gone on, while the faultiness of the Church at large has grown more apparent and the pity of its divisions more poignant, there has been a decrease in my own desire to visit these sins and shortcomings with scorn or denunciation. Here as elsewhere to understand all is to forgive at least much. This is a doctrine that seems to be especially difficult for two widely diverse sets of people to learn. The agnostic rationalists, as illustrated by Dr. Draper in the latter part of last century and by Mr. A. V. Benn in the first decade of this, though as good evolutionists they can command a certain amount of patience if not sympathy with partial accomplishment and slow progress in other spheres of human activity, have none to spare for man's efforts to organize his religious experience so as to make it at once coöperative and continuous. As has been already indicated, they are disposed to judge all things ecclesiastical at their worst and in the light of anti-religious prejudice. On the other hand, there are always to be found in the Church itself people of piety and character, some of them ultra-conservative and others ultra-radical, who because of their particularism and zeal for some especial rite, sect, or doctrine, are prepared to rule out many of the larger experiences of Christendom as having no place in religion's true development; while they exalt some exiguous rill of tradition or precedent into a distinguishing feature of faith and practice. Thus the Seventh Day Adventist tends to hang all the law and the prophets upon an Old Testament construction of the Fourth Command-

ment and upon a forced interpretation of the Apocalypse; and the ultra-ritualist would make the Reservation of the Sacrament and the correct sequence of robe and genuflection in worship matters of large moment, while he denounces the Reformation and all its works or pours out the vials of his scorn upon the millions of his fellow Christians who form the 'sects.'

Not thus is a true estimate of the place and value of the Church to be reached. Its ideals and aims must be considered and its adventures generously evaluated. The privilege which all growing things claim of sloughing off used and outgrown tissue must be granted it. I have known a *Thuya* adjudged to be sick and perhaps dying because the inner portions of its fronds were fringed with sere foliage; but it was by one who did not know that evergreens as truly cast their leaves as do other trees and that these apparent signs of sickness were but its outgrown raiment withering in preparation for departure. I have also heard a noble larch called dead; and that within a few weeks of the time when its spring beauty was to become a really thrilling feature of the landscape; but it was by one who did not know that the *Larix* is as truly deciduous as the elm and who could not realize that the delicious quality of its leaves in spring and their luxuriant quantity in summer gave peculiar emphasis to its death-struck air in winter. The Church has a right to be flexible to change; indeed, this flexibility is a prime object of its teaching and ought to be far more abundantly illustrated in its practice. Yet, interestingly enough,

when the Church exercises this right the critics are quick to accuse it of incertitude; and when it fails to exercise it, they are equally quick to cry out upon its obscurantism. Somewhere between the two the truth seems likely to be found.[1]

When I looked back over the history of the Church, it seemed evident enough that there was a measure of deterioration in life and doctrine alike as both grew complex with the lapse of time and the advance of missionary activity in the generations following the Apostles. Moreover, when the era of persecution was passed, with its fiery tests of sincerity and its tendency to make confession secret in some cases and spectacular in others; when the Church had nominally won the Empire; when, later still, the Bishop of Rome had not only become primate of the whole Western Church, but a temporal ruler who sometimes dictated and more often instigated the policies of emperors, kings, and their frequently rebellious subjects; then, indeed, it appeared as though all semblance of the Church's early grace had fled. The Crusades spoke, to be sure, of an awakening life, but their story is so strange a mingling of faith, fanaticism, and the crassest worldliness as to leave the reader wondering where the balance lies. The Renaissance touched the Church, but not very directly in the line of bettering either

[1] I owe the phrase 'flexible to change' to George Meredith. Some reader may remember the passage in *Beauchamp's Career* dealing with prayer which runs: 'Take this, my Beauchamp, for the good in prayer, that it makes us repose in the unknown with confidence, makes us flexible to change . . .' It is quoted by Professor Moffatt, *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1916), p. 625.

faith or conduct. The Reformation was, to be sure, a mighty ploughing of the field of human experience; but when the field was sown, tares as well as wheat abundantly appeared.

What was a young man to say to all this? Amid the tumult of voices that had spoken in the Church through the ages was there any note of authority anywhere? Among the bewildering mazes of the Church's experience was there any clue to the secrets of spiritual progress? So many wise and faithful souls had found guidance and comfort in the Church under my own limited observation that it seemed worth while to attempt an answer.

But in order to reach any satisfactory conclusion it was necessary to formulate certain principles which have already been suggested, but must now be explicitly stated. It may be granted, in the first place, that most great social and religious changes which men have advocated and striven to introduce, have been good in their purpose and often beneficent in their inception whatever may have been their later history. In the second place, it is to be remembered that none of these can hope altogether to escape the action of what I have called the Principle of the Crust. This fact is fundamental to all wise planning for the future in the realm of religion, sociology, and ethics, and no less important in any attempt we may make to criticize and evaluate the experience of the past. The soil of a field across which a footpath winds will be worn bare by the constant passing. A crop may grow luxuriantly upon either side of the path; but in it the ground is barren,

not because the soil materially differs from that which produces the grain, but because there it is impacted and encrusted by the feet of passers-by, and because constant attrition prevents new growth from starting. Or, to recur to the illustration suggested in an earlier chapter,[1] the very process of making bread palatable and wholesome by baking, forms a crust that differs little in substance from the interior of the loaf, but that none the less forms a barrier against access to it. Sometimes this is so hard to overcome as seriously to impair the purpose for which the loaf was made; often it has to be softened or broken up in order to be easily eaten. Yet it is simply the loaf itself hardened by the play of circumstance and by preparation for rendering its highest service. To be worn out or to be worn callous is the destiny of all tools and devices put to service by man; and the agencies of the Church offer no exception to this rule.

It follows, therefore, that we must expect a certain deciduous character in the life and growth of all abiding institutions. Means will be devised to correct an evil or to supply a lack. These means will succeed measurably, let us say. They will be esteemed accordingly. Some men, and often the world at large, will come to regard them as integral and essential elements of the institution itself. If they fail and pass, it seems to these anxious watchers as though the sources of life itself were failing. They are downcast, and men of Belial exult. Yet for this cause came many of these cherished devices into the

[1] Cf. the sermon on 'The Principle of the Crust,' by Phillips Brooks.

world, that they might serve their longer or shorter day and cease to be. The higher their mission, however, and the more closely they are bound up with man's spiritual interests, the greater the tendency to cling to them after their purpose has been served, to institutionalize them and to transfer them from the realm of means to that of ends.

Here, for instance, was the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. It may be granted that this was a natural and possibly a beneficent outgrowth of early Christian experience. Organization was necessary to growth and efficiency. As this organization developed, it was natural that it should centre in the world's capital. As Christianity became the religion of the State, it was inevitable that the Bishop of Rome should find his authority greatly enhanced. Amid the chaos that followed the break-up of the Western Empire and the irruption of new barbarian life, the service rendered by the Roman hierarchy in preserving something of the old civilization, in extending civilizing influence among the invaders, and in offering a nucleus about which a new order might frame itself, was of high value to mankind. But it by no means follows that this primacy of Rome was a thing that could be continued and extended with advantage to the Church or the world. It became an end in itself; and it is one of the most extraordinary anomalies of history that so late as the latter half of the nineteenth century it was possible to promulgate the dogma of infallibility as a further prop to papal authority. Time had shown that the temporal power of the Pope as exercised over kings, emperors, and

their peoples was of less than dubious value, while as an immediate arbiter of the fortunes of its own subjects in the States of the Church proper, it has become a by-word and a hissing. 'The influence of the Church as a spiritual agency must be exercised upon the will and conscience of men; and a Church that leaves this, its legitimate sphere, and goes into politics, or attempts to use coercion, always comes out badly smirched, and generally outdoes secular governments in craft and cruelty.' [1]

The theology of Augustine affords another illustration of the same truth. It was wrought out of a deep individual experience and was designed to meet a special need of its own day. Because of the poignant personal note in it there are portions of the 'Confessions' that bid fair to live as long as men take an interest in the deepest problems of their own souls. These, like the ideals that inspire and illumine the 'City of God,' have universal meaning and application. It may fairly be said, too, that Augustine's theology was likely to go deeper into life than the more philosophic theology of the East because of its emphasis upon man's sin and God's grace. It had convicting power because it grew out of an experience of conviction, forgiveness, and conscious salvation. Its essence was good doctrine for its own and later times. But when it was wrought into a system by the schoolmen, and this system was adapted and yet further elaborated by the Reformers, it became an end in itself. Its use

[1] Dean W. R. Inge: 'Religion and the State,' *Hibbert Journal* (July, 1920), p. 657.

as a means was more than half obscured when learned men put their best powers to its completion and perpetuation as a structure. Then it grew to be tyrannous, inhibiting freedom of thought, vision, research, and the needed interpretation of an everlasting gospel into terms of a new day. It had to go; and its going was accompanied with considerable strife that tended to belittle its great services and its elements of ageless truth.

In like manner it has been the fashion to deride monasticism as an unnatural excrescence upon the body ecclesiastic and social; and so it may have become. But the candid student, however far removed he may be by experience and sympathy from those branches of the Church that foster monastic orders, will admit that in their inception many of these rendered a real service and that some of them greatly enhanced this service as time went on. There was a day when asceticism was perhaps the only protest against its prevalent corruption and cruelty that the world would heed.[1] The best of the monks made such a protest and the monasteries provided them a refuge. It is quite true that, though the hermit was sometimes a saint, he was also sometimes a savage, as the mobs of the Thebaïd testify. It is likewise true that, while the monastery was a refuge for the oppressed and world-weary, it sometimes became the haunt of sloth and corruption, and that to-day it is a fair question whether society

[1] By 'world' I mean, in the happy phraseology of Dean Inge, 'human society as it organizes itself apart from God . . . largely a system of co-operative guilt with limited liability.'

should permit the withdrawal of such numbers of men and women from the ordinary useful tasks of life in religion's name. But the fact stands that great services to religion, letters, and the arts have been rendered by monks and monasteries. In a monk's cell Jerome translated the Law and Prophets into the language of the western world; it was about the monasteries that at least a sort of twilight reigned during the so-called Dark Ages; and our modern use of the academic cap, gown, and hood is an unconscious confession of our debt to these sequestered groups of churchmen for the continuity of learning.

All these things had their useful functions and each was begun in answer to a need that made its beginning honest and worthy of respect. All inevitably became so institutionalized as to lose much of their usefulness in the realm of means and to usurp a place in that of ends. Then their continuance as integral parts of the Church became a threat to its purity and efficiency if not to its life. The Reformation came.

It is impossible to sum up in a paragraph or two the influence and service of that far-reaching intellectual, social, and spiritual revolution. No attempt of the Catholic historian to explain it away or to belittle it, as though its rise were due to the less admirable side of Martin Luther's nature and the marital ambitions of Henry VIII, avails for a moment. But on the other hand the indiscriminate apologist among Protestant historians has almost as hopeless a task. As a measure of protest against the corruption and tyranny of a Church which had lost

its spiritual and ethical sanctions, the movement was abundantly justified. It was high time that a papal bull should be burnt, and, if need be, a revolution set on foot. Whether substantial reforms could have been effected by less drastic means will always remain an interesting speculation. From a twentieth-century standpoint it would appear as though that time, if it had existed, had irrevocably passed, and that the Western Church had become so completely calloused by long contact with the world as to render reformation hopeless except by some anticipation of the Day of Judgment, such as the Lutheran Revolution brought. Yet, so far as this revolution was primarily an act of protest against corruption, it had no charter of permanence. To endure, any great religious or social movement must have a positive and adventurous programme. The conflict between the North and South which shook America for a generation from 1830 to 1865, maintained itself for many years in the guise of a protest against slavery; and that protest nerved a multitude of brave but eminently peaceful men to gird on the sword; yet the question that finally roused the nation to arms and held it constant to its purpose through the stress of war was the positive demand of the Union for preservation. One of Lincoln's highest claims upon posterity is that he not only felt but formulated this truth so clearly that his words bid fair to live forever. The Union was to be preserved, not merely for its own sake, but because for more than three fourths of a century it had stood as a great exemplar of republican government. It was this ideal of freedom

in the large sense that was worth saving at all costs, as the closing words of the Gettysburg Address attest; the abolition of domestic slavery was a corollary of vast importance — but it was a corollary none the less. The mere abolitionist would bend every effort toward getting rid of the offence whether the Union survived or perished; the true Federal was bent on demonstrating the integrity and vitality of a free state, confident that, if he succeeded, slavery would go to its own place; and history has justified him.

So with the Reformation. We shall never rightly estimate the worth of that mighty upheaval of man's spirit so long as we fix our gaze primarily upon the things against which he protested. That worth is rather to be measured in terms of the things which he asserted; the right of private judgment, the immediate access of the individual to God, the essential priesthood of all believers, salvation through the attitude of life which is called faith. There was profound meaning for the future of civilization in Luther's pronouncement: 'A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one.'[1] When Calvinism took up the essence of these doctrines and applied them to government of the civil state, a power was released which shook the world. It overthrew established dynasties, settled new continents, evoked literatures, founded universities, sent its missionaries to the earth's end. No true estimate is to be formed of the extraordinary

[1] Quoted by Walker, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 345.

influence upon man's thought and deed exerted by such rugged morsels of the earth as Scotland and New England apart from the Presbyterianism of the one, the Congregationalism of the other, and the philosophy of both.

But the new forces released by the mingled protest and affirmation of the reformers were no more immune from attack by age than the Roman Church had been. The freshness of new experience passed; the flexibility of new orders and forms stiffened; the circulatory system of the Protestant churches in its turn grew sclerotic. A rationalism that was hostile to all real spiritual adventure grew up in Germany and a barren deism threatened to take possession of England. It looked as though something like permanent and final decline had set in. Then the inevitable vitality of the religious impulse asserted itself once more, though as usual it was often least welcomed where most needed. The Roman Church had gained as well as lost by its experience of revolution in the sixteenth century and a counter-reformation had gone so far to strengthen the hold of the Church upon certain religious fundamentals that its influence is still a power. Germany developed the pietistic movement that has carried its beneficent missionary endeavor around the world, and, especially by the hands of the Moravians, into tasks and places that were likely to be neglected, as the Syrian leper hospitals and the Esquimaux missions remain to testify. The Wesleys and Whitefield were meanwhile rousing England to the fact that she had a soul to keep alive, and waking, as one current

of electricity will induce another in a concentric coil, the Evangelical Movement in the Established Church. If any reader be skeptical about the abiding influence of religious revival, it will be worth his while to trace the outflow of the high and earnest purpose of the Evangelical Movement, not only upon the statute books and the social life of England, but upon the conscience of Christendom. In America, meanwhile, a similar movement was going forward; and this, with its successors, was finally to bring to bear the irresistible power of a social conscience upon such problems as the foreign slave trade, the right and wrong of domestic slavery, the challenge of Christian missions, the adequate care of the insane, the deaf, and the blind, and particularly to foster that zeal for higher education which has been as general as it has often been shallow and uninstructed. The part which the churches played in all this, especially in laying the foundations of much that is best and bids fair to be most enduring in our educational system, is but little appreciated; nor can it be set forth here, though constant reference should be had to it by every one who undertakes to discuss the problem of the interrelation between truth and conduct.

It remains to say something about the problem and scandal of the Church's divisions. This subject is often discussed as though the problem really assumed its present serious aspect with the Reformation; and the vials of eloquent wrath poured out upon the 'sects' by Roman and Anglican 'Catholics' seem to imply that the sin of schism owes as much to

Luther and his contemporaries as the depravity of the race was once supposed to owe to Adam. But here, too, it needs to be remembered that great men lived before Agamemnon. The history of the days before Rome had gained her general ascendancy in the West when schism reigned supreme need not be recounted. Upon this discord the ecclesiastical Pax Romana is supposed to have descended. But in point of lamentable fact, there never has been a time in the history of pagan or Christian institutions when men lived in general agreement as to the best tenets of belief, forms of worship, or methods of service. The pagan world was divided and sometimes torn by its polytheism. One man affected this god and his neighbor another, even when both were members of the same pantheon. No sooner was Christianity established than sects appeared, inevitably induced by the different experiences and mental dispositions of honest men, to say nothing of such minor schools as may have been due to self-seeking teachers mainly anxious to perpetuate their own names and influence. Nor did the process cease with the general recognition of the headship of Rome and the authority of its bishop. As needs for reformation of abuses, evangelism, or special propaganda arose, special means were organized to meet them. These, like the great orders of the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, or less substantial and more temporary movements such as that associated with Port Royal and the Jansenists, were sectarian in effect. They bear much the same relation to schism that invocation of the saints does to polytheism; and the same may be said of

the great Protestant denominations. They seem to correspond to a deep-seated demand for variety in religious experience. It is impossible to win men to an equal taste for a given ritual or a prescribed form of church administration. The diversity that the pagan found in a choice of gods and temples, that the Romanist finds in his choice of patron saints, and the Greek Catholic in his selection of ikons, the Protestant has offered to him in his diversity of sects. Most of these sects that have risen to the dignity of denominations rose in response to some need. The organization that should have satisfied itself by meeting this particular need and performing a specific task, having tasted the joys of semi-independent existence, claimed full independence; some parent cell divided; its offshoot 'functioned,' rather feebly at first, then gradually acquired the trappings of ecclesiastical standing — its buildings, boards, and officials — and sometimes, quite as much for the sake of these means as for the sake of the original purpose of its founders, went on its way among the sects.

Viewed merely from the standpoint of this superlative diversity, the history of the Church is sad enough. Some good men have turned from it in despair. Others, not so good, have found in this awkwardness of adaptation a sufficient excuse for despising the appeal and refusing the claim of the Church. Other some are disposed to be cynical and a few to be patronizing. Like Bishop Warburton they are moved to say, 'The Church, like the Ark of Noah, is worth saving; not for the sake of the un-

clean beasts that almost filled it and probably made most noise and clamor in it, but for the little corner of rationality that was as much distressed by the stink within as by the tempest without.' [1]

Meanwhile, the rank and file of the Church, in all the larger denominations and in many of the smaller, go on with their support and maintain their allegiance; not always very loyally or energetically, to be sure, but with enough devotion to give as good assurance of continuance as at any time in the past. They are alive to its faults, in many cases more acutely alive to them than to its virtues; but they have the instinctive sense that plain people so often have for the thing that is fundamentally vital and that really lives despite the awkwardness of its adaptation to environment and the partial nature of its service. The fact remains that though but awkwardly adapted the adaptation is and always has been enough to maintain a service that has been continuous and of supreme value. Despite divisions that are pitiful and that seem to threaten disaster, there is an underlying unity of faith that not only insists upon recognition, but wins it. The rivalries are many; yet the coöperation is more fundamental and far-reaching. The unity of faith and doctrine gains a practical emphasis, after all, that the variety of form and worship lacks. Beyond this it remains to be said that just now the best thought of Protestantism is directed, as perhaps never before, toward winning a coöperation in effort that shall belittle

[1] *Warburton Letters*, 2d edition, 1809, p. 114, Letter 46. Quoted by Edward Fitzgerald, *Letters* 1, 52 (April, 1838).

and perhaps finally eradicate wasteful and senseless distinctions.

No decade passes without some progress along this line; and it is worth observing that the efforts in this and other healthful directions originate within the Church itself. The keenest and sanest criticism to which it is ever subjected comes from its own children. There are few signs of vitality more significant than this. When an institution has to be bolstered up from without, repaired and clouted by agencies that do not belong to it, it may be called moribund. The reader may retort that sundry state churches have had just this experience; that they are always being patched and pulled about by the civil authority with which they are unequally yoked. But a more careful study of the situation is likely to reveal the fact that the really moribund thing is the church-state nexus. The day in which this can be efficiently maintained is probably gone forever. The Church of England has had a noble history replete with great names and invaluable services; but it is doubtful whether its largest service to the present is not hampered rather than helped by its connection with the State. 'Every institution, like the living body,' as Dr. Schiller has recently remarked, 'generates toxic by-products and waste products, and in the end is choked by them, if they are not effectively purged away.' [1] This purging process is most normal and wholesome when due to resident influences; and these the Church has never failed to provide, though sometimes, it may be granted, in very inadequate measure.

[1] 'Science and Life,' *Hibbert Journal*, p. 107. October, 1920.

Here, then, is the conclusion of the matter. Man has an instinct for religion. This is rarely a mere individual concern. Men are as normally gregarious in their religious conviction and expression as in their political and social functions. The Christian religion recognizes this tendency and would fain make it an instructed and well-regulated habit. It would, moreover, preserve for each coming generation the best in the experiences of its predecessors. For this purpose an organ is needful, and the Church is the body for the use of the Spirit to this end. It is the Divine Fellowship of Christian persons which constitutes the Church; at least so one of the leaders in the great religious movement that settled the northern portion of America taught,[1] and we still wait for any simpler or more comprehensive definition. No form seems to be prescribed; but the way is left open for the use of any form that the service of the age requires. No complete outward conformity is essential; but such variety in unity is expected as shall comport with freedom and the differing tastes and needs of men, while ensuring honest coöperation in the furthering of the great Christian purposes. Sacraments will have their place as the natural, symbolic link between the generations; and if any man claim that these are far more than symbols, he has liberty to do so, provided he do not thereby rule his brother, who holds a differing view, out from the household of faith. For all this and more the Church stands; and something

[1] Prof. H. H. Scullard, 'Theology of John Robinson,' *Hibbert Journal*, p. 90. October, 1920.

of this has been accomplished. To say that mistakes of the gravest nature have been made is but to repeat that the Church is made up of fallible people, and that on all the behests of the Spirit, it uses human means. But in every age it has done more than survive; it has really lived, propagated itself, extended the limits of Christian knowledge and experience, and found in itself the urge and the means to correct its own worst faults. I was bound to conclude, that widely as I might be forced to differ from some of its doctrine and more of its ways, here was a vital and enduring reality to be taken into account.

CHAPTER X

CREEDS: A STAFF OR A BURDEN?

I STILL remember the concern of my mother, when, as a boy of thirteen, I united with the Church, that I should have an intelligent idea of the Confession of Faith that was then a part of the form of admission; and the expressed feeling of my father, church officer and true son of the Puritans that he was, that this Confession was far too long and theological. He was right. Article followed article, the significance of which was distinctly theological rather than religious. It dealt, that is, with the philosophy of religion itself. At that time the revolt against long and intricate statements of faith was just beginning to make itself felt. Popular books like J. G. Holland's 'Arthur Bonnicastle' made capital of it in the interests of evangelical faith, as, a decade or two later, Mrs. Humphry Ward was to capitalize a different phase of the same question in the interests of a half-spiritualized and half-socialized agnosticism.

But, boy-like, I was little concerned with these things. The length of the Confession of Faith did not confound me. It was, to be sure, good to have the whole business over as soon as might be, and so I should have wished brevity to be considered. But as to its articles, the general meaning of them I accepted, and for the rest I took them to stand for the experience of people who had fared farther than I. They had formed these opinions as they went. I

might or might not form the same. It mattered little to me then. The company of believing people, rather than a complete index of their beliefs, was what mattered. The articles were accepted as a sort of symbol of experience which in greater or less degree I was to share, but without any definite expectation of exactly duplicating it. The thing stood there in the background of religious experience very much as Magna Charta, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution stood behind my experience of citizenship. I was to enter intelligently into the heritage of these great instruments of freedom, to accept their principles, and definitely to accord allegiance to the last. It was possible to do this without ever having read the Constitution. The Connecticut law, to be sure, made ability to read the Constitution one of the conditions of suffrage, and upon being 'made a freeman,' as our fine phrase ran, I was put to the test in spite of the fact that I had just come from the university and might have been presumed to be at least formally literate. But it is safe to say that not a tithe of Connecticut's citizens, even of those who had borne arms and laid down their lives for their country, had ever read the document through, to say nothing of having mastered its contents. Yet it would be going quite too far to say on the one hand that they were not honest citizens, or on the other that the Constitution was a farce.

I cite this somewhat faulty analogy to illustrate the necessary limitations of language when men come to deal with that sphere of life in which their

activities are coördinated and their beliefs generalized. If language were anywhere to attain to exactness of definition, outside the realm of mathematics, it might be expected to be in an instrument of fundamental law like the Constitution designed to order the relations of millions of citizens and scores of 'sovereign states.' Yet so impossible has it been to frame this document explicitly that contests have arisen over it in every decade, some of which have shaken our society, while one grew into the world's greatest civil war. Furthermore, because the Nation's experience is always raising new questions some phases of whose answer must be sought in the Constitution, further interpretations and applications of this instrument are so necessary that a Supreme Court — a body of unique eminence and dignity — must be maintained.

The case of the Declaration of Independence is slightly different. Here we have not only the statement of a case and a summing-up of experience, but a declaration of principles and of faith. It is exactly in those parts of the document which deal with principles and faith that its language becomes at once most memorable and significant. Yet it is here also that from the very nature of the case it becomes most figurative and least precise. Probably no phrase in the famous instrument is better known than that in which the Signers profess their faith that men are born free and equal. This is a statement which multitudes of those whose own freedom and equality with their neighbors derive from this document have been known to question. It is easy

to say and to prove that in some senses of the words men are not born free and cannot be made equal. Given a hundred honest and intelligent citizens who reverence the Declaration as one of the instruments of Anglo-American liberty, worthy to stand in the succession of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, and, if you endeavor to obtain an exact definition of their understanding of these words, you may conceivably receive a hundred different answers. One will incline to a very inclusive definition of man's rights and privileges as inherent in his humanity; another may restrict these closely and leave the bulk of them to the achievement of the individual as a self-determining person; while the other ninety-eight may appear at any point between their fellows.

It does not follow from this variety of interpretation or of private judgment that these men are not honest in their general acceptance of the Declaration as a 'platform,' or that they are unfitted for co-operation upon it; nor does it for a moment follow that the document itself is nothing but a form and a pretence. The true conclusion is that in this realm all language becomes of necessity more or less figurative and picturesque. It is, as Matthew Arnold liked to say, language 'thrown out' at a subject so great as to have fed ideals and invited experiment while it defied definition. It is no fair criticism of the faith of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence to say that men have been, and, so far as we can see, are likely to remain, unequally endowed with talent and ability. The thing the Signers had in mind was an equality before the law,

an equal right of protection, and — though this was less clearly in their thoughts — an equal right to self-determination and opportunity. As respected these latter phases of equality, the Declaration represented an ideal rather than an actual or an immediately possible condition. No doubt every man among the Signers would have rejected the complete application of its affirmations to the slaves who were already so important an element in the population of many of the colonies. But even so it would be unfair to accuse them of hypocrisy. They had caught glimpses of certain great principles of social organization. They affirmed these principles as theirs. The ultimate effects of their application to society they could not foresee, and might not have liked had they foreseen them. But, so far as experience enabled them to judge, they accepted these expressions as indicating a direction in which they proposed to advance and a cause to which they were ready to devote life, fortune, and honor. The fact that the statements were pregnant with consequence beyond the vision and the liking of the Signers enhances rather than diminishes their fitness to stand in the forefront of a great adventure. They are meant to suggest rather than to define.

As we advance into the realm of religion, it is of the very first importance to remember that the language of religion is figurative. This is not a matter of choice. The option is forced, as the logicians say. Generally speaking, the more intimate personal experience becomes, the more difficult is it to define it accurately and explicitly. Words like

'truth,' 'love,' 'loyalty,' and 'honor' stand for things that are intimately known at first hand by a multitude of humble and illiterate men; yet to define them adequately would tax the ingenuity of the wisest. Our most successful attempts are through appeals to somewhat kindred experiences, by means of synonyms or by picture words 'thrown out' at the experience for which the word stands. It is worth while to note that the derivation and etymological significance of the word 'religion' itself has been in dispute since the days of Cicero. We may say that religion is an attempt to coördinate life with its varied experiences and put it into right relation to the creative and preservative Power immanent in the Universe; or we may say that it is communion with God in worship and service. Each attempt at definition has a sort of descriptive value; yet neither is complete or definite. The former is more detached and philosophical, the latter more intimate and experiential. The philosopher might say, indeed, that the latter has no value because it contains the undefined and essentially undefinable word 'God.' But here the average plain man will be right; 'God' may not be a word which he can define; yet it will none the less indicate what is to him a very real experience. He has some sense of God; some feeling of obligation to a Power beyond himself; some reverence for a norm of conduct which accords with the idea of God's being and will; and he has in all probability made some attempt to bring his life into agreement with this order of things, or else, moved by a mysterious repugnance, he has maintained a more or less hostile attitude toward it.

But whichever attitude he takes he will be forced to express himself by picture words, 'thrown out' at an idea too great and an experience too intimately personal for precise definition. It is true that some will attempt such definition in the interests of logical consistency or for the sake of controversy; but only to illustrate again the futility of trying to cram the greater into the less. Here is something of the tragedy and pathos of human existence that the Idea should so generally transcend the measured fact and that the Experience should so often outrun the word panting laboriously after it.

It is in the light of such facts as these that the question whether creeds are a staff or a burden must be decided. Men lightly say of the great historic creeds — the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian — that their day has passed, that they no longer fittingly express the adventure of man's soul and that they had best go overboard. Concerning the last named — the Athanasian — this is doubtless true. It is too essentially theological. It was, and perhaps to some extent still is, an engine of controversy. And it has damnatory clauses which ill befit the confession of a believer's faith. The Protestant Episcopal Church in America has done well to be rid of it, and the English Church on certain days will continue to dig pitfalls in the path of some of her most conscientious ministers until it be expunged.

But the case of the other two ancient creeds is somewhat different. They, too, are in some respects ill-fitted to define modern faith. There is awkward-

ness and an infelicity that approaches insincerity in their use for that purpose. Yet they hold their place in our books of devotion and in our services of worship. 'Yes,' the critic will reply, 'through mere power of inertia. They stay because none has grace and grit enough to remove them. The inbred conservatism of church officials and the willingness of the average layman and particularly of the average laywoman to be led by them, keep these outgrown documents in their place.'

This, however, is but part of the story. These documents keep their places in our worship and in the instruction of the young, not merely through inertia, but because they are beloved for their present service as really as for their history. It is interesting to observe how many really modern-minded men are loath to give them up. These cannot subscribe to the interpretations that have sometimes been put upon their clauses — yet they do not want to see the ancient forms go to the scrap-heap. Why?

In the first place, their history makes its appeal. The great creeds stand for a catholic or general experience of the Church. The belief they set forth has been 'common' in the deeper sense of that often misunderstood word. They represent a sort of platform on which Greek, Roman, and Protestant Christians have found common ground to stand and worship. They are, moreover, the results of much travail of soul.

Men have struggled with the world, flesh, and devil, and wrestled in argument with one another to

win to this platform and to maintain it. Granting that some of this struggle and wrestling has been unworthy, it cannot be said to have been unworthy as a whole; because, define religion as one may, the struggle has been for a salvation that was real; for a conquest of sin and self that might prove lasting; and for a reconciliation of the individual with his world that should issue in ultimate and perfect peace. In all communions such things have come to pass on the way beside which (to change our figure) these articles of faith have stood as guide-posts or mile-stones. There is an instinctive feeling in the heart of a plain man that it is ungracious to overthrow or hew down signs that have done such service. Even when he feels that they have become so age-worn as occasionally to be misunderstood he will prefer to repair and to supplement rather than to destroy. And here again the instinct of the plain man is a true one. An eminent manufacturer like Mr. Henry Ford may pause long enough in the fabrication of cheap automobiles to announce to the world that 'History is "bunk"'; and an unthinking portion of that world will acclaim the announcement. But the man who is hospitable to his second thought is not deceived. He knows that in the field of automotive machinery Mr. Ford's opinion is valuable because his knowledge and experience are large; that his opinion in certain fields of practical economics is at least worth attention because here his experience if not his general knowledge is considerable; but that so far as history or the records of the sorrows, joy, and achieving struggle of mankind is concerned, his

opinion is worth little because both knowledge and experience are wanting. Whatever 'bunk' may be, it connotes a contempt which the wise man, whether learned or unlearned, will never visit upon the age-long story of his kind, however faultily it may have been told by its chroniclers. Every path smoothed and kept clear by the frequent feet of burden-bearing man becomes in time sacred ground to the observer of discerning and sympathetic mind.

Hence the discerning and sympathetic man of modern mind, however faulty he may think these ancient creeds to be as definitions of faith finds himself loath to give them up. He may catch himself wondering at his own hesitation here. Even while the well-worn verses of the 'Chambered Nautilus' reëcho in the more stately mansion which he has built his soul, he feels that something is lacking if he turns a forgetful or inhospitable back upon past experience. He is right, I say, however difficult it may be to frame an adequate explanation for his feeling.

A second and very significant reason for the continuance of the greater creeds lies in their essentially symbolic nature. It is an interesting fact that some things used in one way render their real and more important service in another. Many creeds were designed to define the position of the Church at some given juncture so that seekers might find it, might know that they had found it, and might forever distinguish it from some unblessed temporary encampment of heretics. But the great historic creeds to which men still cling, even when they half-

rebuke themselves for clinging, were never fabricated or made at once. They grew up in the experience of believers and became symbolic of faith's adventure. The world thought of them as definitions of faith, as delimiting the fields of belief, as marking out the strait and narrow way to Heaven, as keeping the doors of the Church; and creeds were abused as often as used in these various mistaken services. Meanwhile, the dependent heart of man, instinctively discerning the thing that was vital, knew them to be symbols rather than definitions, way-marks of past travail and challenges to future advance.

To indicate somewhat more definitely what I mean, let us turn to the chief affirmations of the Apostles' Creed. It begins with an affirmation concerning God. 'I believe in God the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ His only Son . . . and in the Holy Ghost.' To one man such words seem primarily to constitute a definition of God. His idea of God is true enough to assure him that God cannot be crammed into a definition. Hence he will none of the Creed. Now, if he were right and there were nothing here but a definition, it is difficult to see how the Creed could have maintained itself, not merely in the services, but in the hearts of men through so many generations. Authority could, of course, do something and has done what it could. But men emancipated from authority, with no obligation but their own free convictions and affections still cling to this symbol of faith. They would not impose it upon their fellows, nor would they compel its adoption in public worship; but they

feel that it stands for something quite too precious to be surrendered.

It is, however, no definition that I, for one, cherish. I am as firm as my neighbors in denying that God can be crammed into a definition. But I as sturdily maintain that here is something vastly transcending a definition in both significance and worth. A definition is often a dead thing. Here we have the symbol of a vital and continuing experience. The more completely I was emancipated from merely traditional religion, the more convinced I became that here was something vital. Man's heart had cried out for a living God, and out of the wonder of the world — a wonder that began as 'the child of ignorance' and grew into 'the parent of adoration' — a Power that seemed to create and preserve was revealed to him. This Power was not to be completely described in any form of words; but man's experience of it might be symbolized by the words 'Father,' 'Creator,' 'Preserver.' It was so symbolized. Multitudes found the experience for which the symbol stood to fit their need. It kept them from intellectual confusion and from moral obliquity. This hypothesis of a Creator and Preserver of all things was one to the test of which they could afford to trust their lives.

But the experience went farther. Man not only needed God for the creation and preservation of the frame of Nature in which his own life was set; he also needed Him as really, resident and active in the world of affairs. He needed the translation of divinity into terms of humanity. There can be no

question of the general sense of the need, because every highly developed religion witnesses more or less clearly to this hope that the divine and transcendent might find expression at least in some measure in the human. Incarnation is no mere incident of religion. It might almost be said to be of its essence, because it is simply the expression of religion's most vital message in a language that all men understand — that is, in the forms and incidents of common life.

Let us admit that something of this combination of divine essence and human incident appeared in the advent of every prophet who spoke for God. In Jesus Christ the experience entered upon a new phase and took on a uniquely authoritative form. A really divine glory was reflected from his face which lighted with a new meaning and hope some very dark places. Quite naturally, too, and without any striving, he succeeded in universalizing all that was best in human thought about God's power and righteousness, so that man's relation to his Creator became a family bond and God looked out through the veil of Nature as a Father while man found himself to be a son. Less was heard of the form of righteousness and more of the essence of goodness to which all men make instinctive response. And most significant of all, wherever Jesus Christ went while on his ministry and wherever his Spirit came afterward, a way was open for redemption and reconciliation. A bad man might become a good man. There was no doubting it because bad men became good men under the world's very eyes; not

merely correct and righteous men, but good with an outreaching, leavening, humane, and redemptive goodness.

This is what is symbolized by the phrase 'I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.'

But the experience of men has gone farther. They have discovered, that just as Divine Love, redemptive and reconciling, was incarnate in Jesus Christ, so it is immanent in the individual and in society today. There is a Spirit of Truth acting through the organ that we call conscience for the rebuke of sin, the guidance of conduct, toward individual righteousness and social comity, and inciting to the pursuit of larger knowledge in every department of human endeavor. Under its urge man cannot rest while his personal conduct is imperfect, his social life disorganized or his knowledge incomplete. The ice-bound poles challenge him, and he seeks them despite darkness, cold, and loneliness, because without such knowledge as this adventure brings his mission to subdue the earth is but partly accomplished. The way of the eagle in the air challenges him, and he learns to outfly the eagle as he learns to outswim the fish. The paths of the stars challenge him, and he discovers, at the impulse of this same Spirit of Truth, that he can map their paths in space, foretell conjunctions and occultations, compute distances, measure masses, and even resolve what seems to be a mere point of light into constituents which he can read as the telegrapher reads his dots and dashes, thus telling the structure of some inconceivably distant sun. At the other end of this adventure

of scientific vision, behold the microscope, opening doors into infinitesimal chambers whence come the issues of human life and death.

The problem of social disorganization challenges him to be rid of international jealousies, to curb the tendency of the privileged to exploit the needy, to cleanse cities of drunkenness and prostitution, villages of ignorance and degeneracy, social classes of ill-will to one another. These tasks are so large that many men laugh at them as impracticable, while those who attack them most courageously have their hours of discouragement. But the important thing is not whether this man will hear or forbear, or whether that man keeps or loses his courage. The important thing is the 'inward must' that assails human selfishness and inertia until the thing needful is accomplished. The social conscience is a mighty reality.

Most intimate of all is the mysterious but inevitable voice that reasons of sin, righteousness, and judgment in the individual breast. To say that this is the inherited experience of the race speaking with the force of instinct does not explain it away; or, if it seem to explain it away to-day, back the thing will come to-morrow. There is only one way of living permanently at peace with Conscience; and that is the way of enlightenment, so that its voice shall find an organ of intelligible expression in us, and then of obedience, which shall align our conduct with the best experience of the past and the best hope of the future. No better form of words has probably ever been devised for the expression of these partial yet

most intimate experiences of truth-seeking than the phrase 'I believe in the Holy Spirit.'

Thus it appears that the greater phrases of the Apostles' Creed are not pronouncements of dogma in the worse sense of that abused word; but rather confessions, in more or less symbolic form, of human experience; and here again the experience is not merely that of the past, but the hoped-for and expected experience of the future.

This latter confession appears most clearly set forth in the Creed's later clauses. 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church' represents a hope to be realized quite as much as an experience to be recorded; but it stands as a symbol of men's faith in a certain unity of God-fearing and truth-loving folk, cherished as an ideal partly evident to-day and to be more fully realized to-morrow. Meanwhile, the 'Communion of Saints' — that is, the sympathetic agreement upon the principles, and, to a lesser extent, upon the policies of good-will among men, and a continuity of experience for the living and the dead — becomes increasingly evident as Christian men of all denominations unite their efforts in practical endeavor to mitigate human suffering and advance enlightenment.

There is no need to linger over the phrase 'the Forgiveness of Sins,' because all Christian men and a multitude who decline to call themselves by that name at once accept it. Yet it is doubtful if many of them realize the distinctiveness of this belief and hope. The ethnic faiths have their rites of propitiation and atonement. The Hebrew saw evidence

about him of the lengths to which fear of their gods could drive the heathen, as he watched Moloch stretch out hot arms for little children or beheld the King of Moab sacrificing a son upon his beleaguered wall. Abraham, wonted to such scenes and feeling that he must emulate them, is an outstanding exemplar of this tendency to touch the limit of endeavor in an effort to propitiate offended or reluctant deity. Then he receives a revelation through this experience that no unnatural gift can ever please a God, who indeed asks our best, but never denies or outrages the deeper instincts which He has implanted. Forgiveness from this time on was within man's reach. But in the Old Testament it was a covering-up of sin so that it should be no more seen; or the sewing-up of one's misdeeds in a sack which God was pleased to cast behind Him — out of sight and out of mind.

Then came the doctrine of the Suffering and Atoning Servant and at last the efficient Grace of Christ himself with power to forgive sin. It is only as we look into the history of Christian experience that it appears how new and large a sense has attached to this act of forgiveness. Once men's sins were covered, hidden, lost. Now they were cleansed away. But more than that has appeared in history. This cleansing has often been of such a sort that not only has the sinner stood up clean and free again, but the very refuse of his cleansing has somehow gone to fertilize the fields of time. The Christian treatment of sin is like the wiser treatment of the sewage of a city; not only is the dangerous element cleansed

away; out of the experience itself something is saved beside the cleansing of the city; a sanctifying remnant is brought back to the further use of man. It is thus that the soul of goodness in things evil is redeemed and the man who has sinned is set to serve his fellows with a peculiar ardor and efficacy,

'Turning the blind ones back from the abyss,'

whose depth and danger he himself has plumbed. To such things as this he witnesses who testifies to his faith in the forgiveness of sin.

Now comes a phrase that to many will represent the crux of our contention: 'I believe in the Resurrection of the Body.' What chance is there in the light of modern science that such an affirmation can have honest place in any confession of to-day? The reader will permit me here to recall the freedom of my own position as I answer that question. I had gone far enough along the road of emancipation to feel free of all mere ecclesiastical convention. All luggage that had ceased to be useful could go. But when I reached that point, it became evident that no one but a fool setting out on a journey would discard all his luggage just because its proper care and use required some thought. It once fell to my lot to travel for days over an almost treeless plain, where our fuel instead of being cut down had to be dug up by a mattock from among the roots of pre-existent trees; but I did not therefore think it wise to throw away my axe. As trees had been, so trees might be again; and so trees proved to be — trees against which that axe was in due time lifted up.

This phrase in the Creed had evidently meant something in man's experience; it might be significant again. I would at least look twice and think twice before discarding it.

On looking, it appeared that there had been a time when this meant the uprearing of the original physical skeleton from the grave; its clothing in flesh, sinew, and feature until a man stood forth in physical likeness to his former self; and that there were people — I hoped they were few — who still regarded this as the natural sense of the article of faith. The latter discovery was made with some surprise; for I never could remember a time, even in the early and most literal phases of my use of the language of religion, when I so much as dreamed that the words could refer to the resuscitation of a physical frame; I could not remember ever being taught that the words referred to a spiritual body, though perhaps I was so taught. It seemed simply self-evident and axiomatic in my own experience that the phrase should refer to a spiritual experience. This was its natural sense to me, while the physical reference seemed non-natural to the point of almost humorous grotesqueness, when I first learned that some intelligent people put that interpretation on the words. Yet I was assured by competent critics that the early use of the phrase was as an affirmation of physical resuscitation.

Was there a necessary and fundamental contradiction here between their position and mine? Did the fact that some men had used the phrase to affirm their faith in the resurrection of their veritable flesh

and bones — a sense that seemed so non-natural to me — preclude me from using it in what seemed a natural sense as indicating not only the survival of personality, but its endowment with some instrument of self-expression? The literalist to whom all symbolic use of words or things is anathema, whether he be ultra-conservative or ultra-radical, will joyfully say 'Yes.' Here to him is happy contradiction. Once a man thought his physical body to be in question; therefore, forever, no man shall see in the phrase any more than this.

But let us look again. Suppose we even venture to ask the literalist of old time what he meant by 'body.' He would have said, of course, 'The material form and frame which is *me*.' He would very likely have used just this accusative or objective form of the pronoun even at the risk of taking a liberty with grammatical law. But suppose that he, sitting in his house, had recognized the footstep of a friend advancing to the door; and then had heard the familiar and distinctive knock that guaranteed the advent of good company. What under these circumstances was the real process of his mind? What were the real intermediaries of the intelligence of his friend's approach? The foot that marched, the hand that knocked, of course; in short, the body of the advancing friend. Yes, but as he heard the footstep was it the image of the physical member that impinged upon his consciousness? Did his mind's eye see the foot as shapely or clumsy, alert or slow? And when the knock followed did his inward eye behold a physical hand, delicate or toil-worn, well-kept or

slovenly, gently assailing his door? The experienced reader will at once answer 'No.' Only under most exceptional circumstances does the sense-perception of the accustomed activities of friends involve any especial recognition of the material organs by which such activities are accomplished. Even when the activity has notable quality, as in the case of a painter catching not merely a likeness but a character upon his canvas, or a surgeon exploring that curious bundle of life with which our earthly existence is bound up, my wonder fastens itself upon the acquired skill of each. It is quite possible that in both cases I may pay no more attention to the physical hand than to the brush or knife that it holds, because my instinctive thought of the hand is that it is, like brush or knife, a tool; or, more exactly, an organ by which a person expresses will and purpose.

This is in nine cases out of ten, to speak generally, the sense in which words relating to the physical frame are and have been used. They are practically symbolic. When the man of old time asserted his faith in the Resurrection of the Body, his mind really centred upon faith in a personal life beyond the grave in which his individuality should remain distinct and find itself provided with a proper organ of self-expression. His physical frame was the only organ of self-expression of which he knew; perhaps the only one of which he could conceive. He carried the word 'body' over into his creed untroubled by any questions concerning its composition and inevitable dissolution at death or its continuous

dissolution and renovation during life. I on my part can discover no form of words that better fits the general hope and faith of the Christian to-day than this same phrase. I look for the resurrection of the body, not in any physical sense, but as representing the furnishing of the soul with an organ of self-expression. As the physical frame enabled the soul to work its will upon the world of material circumstance, to weave and build and plant, so must it be, *mutatis mutandis*, in any life which shall succeed to this. I do not dogmatize about it. I simply affirm it as an hypothesis worth complete and utter testing if past experience and present need go for anything. The believer looks for the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting in this sense that he would fain order his life here after such a manner that it may merge itself with as little confusion, shame, or breach of continuity as possible into a spiritual existence beyond the grave where its faults shall be repaired and its best ideals realized.

I am quite aware that two groups of people, one ultra-conservative and the other ultra-radical, both of whom object on a-priori grounds to any identification of revelation and discovery, or of the rational and the spiritual, will cry out upon me here. They will tell me that I am juggling with words in thus attempting to open a deeper meaning beneath the surface of faith's language which shall reveal the real continuity of man's religious experience. That charge of insincerity is always easy to make and never easy to bear. I do not care either to resent or to answer it, being quite confident of the reality

which underruns the symbols whereby man has expressed his hunger and thirst for God and the means by which that appetite has been at least partially assuaged. The greater symbols, called creeds, especially those which grew up instead of being merely fabricated to meet some sudden emergency, have a right to continued life and use. That use is not as a test of orthodoxy in any narrow sense; it certainly is not as a definition delimiting the faith of the individual believer or congregation. But rather as a testimony to the way by which the Pilgrim Church has come through the generations.[1]

[1] If any reader ask whether I would make the use of the Apostles' Creed a regular part of the service of worship, I reply that it seems to me almost ideally adapted to such use except in one particular. That is the article relating to the birth of Jesus of the Virgin Mary. His conception by the Holy Ghost — that is, his special designation to a special service in the providence of God; his suffering and death; his return in power (whether this were a physical or a spiritual return may fairly be left to the experience and faith of the individual confessor) to reconstitute the life and conduct of the disciples; and his place at the right hand of God as indicating his peculiar service of moulding the thought of believers concerning the divine; all these have so much of the symbolic form that the affirmation of faith in experience is clear and unmistakable while there is an absence of dogmatic detail. Concerning the birth of Jesus, the fact that it was in the large and real sense of special moment in the progress of God's spiritual kingdom is emphasized in the clause concerning his conception. The particular manner and method of his physical birth is not of religious moment. If the clause were understood as it probably was at one time, in denial of the old Docetic contention that Jesus was only a blessed phantom with no substantial physical body or any really human attributes and appetites, its statement that he was really born in the physical sense of the woman known as the Virgin Mary, would remove a large part of the objection to its use. But the fact is that to-day it is generally understood to refer to a specific miracle of Jesus' birth without the agency of a human father. Thus it takes on an anti-creedal complexion. For if it is essential that the true article of a creed should assert some large spiritual truth capable of test in experience, it is almost as essential that it should avoid the assertion of a spe-

As the worshipping congregation in a Roman Catholic Church keeps the 'Stations of the Cross,' advancing with prayer and adoration from one point to another in the progress to Calvary, so the wise and reverent Christian will confess again the way his fathers trod to faith and freedom; will mark the stations of their progress; and commemorate these stations with thanksgiving in his worship. But he will do so with his face to the future in expectation of a larger adventure in the same path to-morrow, instead of toward the past in the endeavor to duplicate the experience of yesterday.

cific miracle. This one blemish seriously interferes with the Creed's use in worship.

The subjoined Confession of Faith, long used in several ancient New England churches, may illustrate on the one hand the correct use of symbolic statement of the large matters of Christian experience, and on the other help to show how far the treatment of creeds as symbols is from an attempt to express them in language so indefinite as 'to mean something or nothing.'

Confession

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator and Ruler of all things:

And in Jesus Christ, in Whom the love of God was so revealed that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life:

And in the Holy Ghost, as the indwelling Spirit of Truth:

And in the forgiveness of Sin, through repentance and faith:

And in the Holy Scriptures, as revealing the Way of Eternal Life:

And in one Church of the Redeemed on earth and in heaven; and in one Baptism for the remission of sins; and in one Communion of Saints:

And we look for the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life Everlasting.

Amen.

CHAPTER XI

CONVERSION: AN EXPERIENCE OR A DELUSION?

Into our home in my childhood there used to come at intervals a paper called the 'American Messenger.' It was the organ of the American Tract Society and was of a highly 'evangelical' type — using that word in the sense which impels one to put it between inverted commas. I mean no disrespect to it in saying this; but simply that it carried over the figurative language of religion very boldly and sometimes rather baldly into the realm of the matter-of-fact. A paragraph still stands out before my eyes — indeed, its place in the first page clings to memory — in which one friend tells another that it is his birthday and that he is so many years old; let us say twenty-seven. The friend addressed, knowing the speaker to be a man in middle life, wonders; and is told that just seven and twenty years have passed since his conversion; that then his life really began; and that this is his true anniversary. Though quite too young to trace the thing to its ultimate 'why' and 'wherefore,' I felt instinctively the somewhat bizarre note that sounded through this narrative, and was divided in my mind between wonder whether such an adventure, as clearly defined and as subversive of the past, was to fall to me, and a curious tendency to criticize the story as somehow confusing the essence of a great experience with its

form. Concerning the reality of the experience I had little question.

Not long ago it was reported that a member of Parliament addressing several thousand men in one of the great industrial centres of the north of England expressed his opinion that in the juncture of public affairs which called forth their meeting his hearers had little to hope from religion, whether organized or personal. Then he added, 'Perhaps I ought to tell you that I myself very nearly was "born again" fifteen years ago.' Speaking thus, he laughed; and his mirth called reciprocal laughter from his hearers. Why did he laugh? Or they? There was nothing intrinsically funny in his suggestion that a door which untold multitudes had thought to be a door of help and hope was permanently closed and that 'No Thoroughfare' was written over it. It is equally safe to say that of the throng who echoed the laughter not one who had received Christian training felt his heart to be any lighter or more joyous as he heard and assented to the suggestion that all this business of being 'born again' was a delusion. No, their laughter, at least as heard at a distance, sounds a little bitter and mocking. One fancies that it would not have taken much to sober the audience, and that some faces, the laughter done, might well have grown a trifle seamed and drawn; for it is a significant fact that sardonic laughter, or the laughter of disillusion, ploughs quick furrows and that they are unlovely to look upon.

Yet it behooves the thinking man to consider which of these two attitudes toward one of the crucial

experiences of religion is the right one. I was myself called upon to consider it. The current philosophy of the closing decade of the nineteenth century tended to encourage sympathy with the latter view. Man was the creature of heredity and environment; his destiny inhered not so much in himself as in his circumstances. While one hesitated to speak of him as an automaton, yet the automatic element was so thrust into the foreground that it was a question whether one could much longer properly characterize his experience as an adventure at all. Any pronounced change of life's direction, unless it were mere lateral direction, was looked upon with suspicion, and it again became a question whether any regenerative experience would not have to be denied reality altogether.

Yet it is an interesting fact that exactly contemporary with the spread of such notions among the rank and file of ordinarily intelligent people came the great revival movements associated with the name of Mr. Moody and his co-workers. It is just as impossible to deny the reality of this work, its compelling influence upon multitudes of individuals, and its very considerable influence upon social groups and communities, as it is to deny the power and essential validity of the doctrine of development. There is a common notion among those who are at once intelligent and unthinking (the apparent contradiction of terms covers a large class) that the appeal of Messrs. Moody and Sankey to repent and be saved was effective mainly among people of narrow outlook and meagre experience. No doubt

the 'common people' heard these men gladly and made up a majority of their congregations and converts. But this was of necessity, since there are so many 'common people'; and since, moreover, these develop in the long run a fairly sound ability for the discernment of men who speak constructively upon great themes; as Matthew Arnold pointed out, in saying that those who flocked to hear Messrs. Moody and Sankey preach and sing the Gospel were essentially right.

But it must not be overlooked that the appeals of such evangelists reached and profoundly moved numbers of men whose intellectual powers and capacity for influence were notable. Henry Drummond was such a man; and whatever one may think of his attainments in the realm of pure science, no question can be raised concerning his achievements in reaching young men in British and American universities. In many cases these lives were waked from relative lethargy, inspired with a new desire for living that should be not only clean but efficient, and directed into ways of larger service than they might otherwise have found. Wilfred Grenfell was such a man. Under Mr. Moody's influence he was led to devote not only his intellectual powers and considerable professional attainments, but his quite unusual personal gifts, to the help of neglected and forgotten fishermen. His direct service to the bodies and souls of those who man the North Sea fishing fleet or scantily people the coasts of Newfoundland and the Labrador has been notable; but in the long future it may well appear that his largest service has

been as an interpreter of the appeal of Jesus to young men and women. He has spoken in terms that they have understood and heeded. Sometimes in the mere spirit of adventure and sometimes with the clear purpose of service, these have followed him into tasks that have given fresh interpretation and zest to life as well as new directions to endeavor.

It must be clear to any unprejudiced observer of these so-called 'conversions' that something real happened. Making every allowance for the hypnotic influence of crowds, for the elaborate preparations sometimes made to focus public attention upon revival services, for occasional love of excitement and eagerness to share a new experience, and subtracting from the total result all those whose interest was evanescent, it yet remains true that it would be impossible to write the history of thought, education, and social endeavor, to say nothing of the story of a multitude of individual lives, without distinct reference to religious revivals and the personal 'conversions' that accompanied them.

This impression was deepened as I looked back to similar periods of religious awakening in other times. Who can measure the influence upon the world of the struggle through which John Bunyan fought his way to peace with God and man alike? A century later, in an England seemingly careless of religion in all but its formal aspects, John Wesley after long doubt and hesitation found himself the subject of a special 'work of grace.' His brother Charles shared it. George Whitefield by a different theological road found a similar goal. The Evangelical Revival was

on. Crowds heard the Gospel — crowds that had been neglected and well-nigh forgotten, but that now developed first hostility, then interest, and finally a devotion that organized itself for service. The drum-beat of British Empire echoing around the world has become proverbial; but it sinks into insignificance beside the chorus of voices still singing 'Jesus, Lover of my soul,' and other of Charles Wesley's hymns. There is extant the record of a plain Connecticut farmer who left his work, saddled his horse, and rode post-haste to Middletown when news came that Whitefield was to preach there; and his account of that day's doings can still after a century and three quarters stir the reader like the sound of a trumpet. This ploughing of fallow fields produced the Evangelical Revival in the English Church. It had large part in making possible lasting humanitarian reforms. Schools were founded; missionary societies were organized; schools and societies both being served by men and women who thought this experience of conversion so real a one as to justify a devotion of life to the relatively unremunerative tasks of teaching and preaching.

'Revivals' less notable in general history have had similarly permanent results. The preaching of C. G. Finney in the second quarter of the nineteenth century presented in a significant combination the appeals to emotion and to reason. It left deep impress on the minds of many men — some of them among the most intelligent of their generation. It brought hundreds of them to an inevitable conversion. It issued just as inevitably in the establish-

ment of one of the more notable of American colleges with its allied schools of Music and Religion.

The Moody and Sankey revivals of the later decades of the century passed through the same phases and had the same issue. Many 'converts' were made. Some doubtless lapsed. A large number of others lived out worthy but undistinguished Christian lives. A lesser group kept the torches lit by great experience burning and passed them on from hand to hand. They preached, taught, organized various forms of Christian effort, went abroad as missionaries. But with no less inevitability came the founding of great schools under the impulse to perpetuate by training the beneficent results of 'getting right with God.'

The more comprehensively and the more fairly I tried to consider this so-called experience of 'conversion,' the deeper grew my conviction that it embodied some reality. What was its essence?

One thing that elevates man above his fellow animals would seem to be his sense of himself as distinguished from his world. He is *in* his world yet not altogether *of* it. In that world the normal man craves new experience. He is forever seeking to widen his knowledge and extend his dominion. Reference has already been made to his insatiable appetite for little or great adventure — adventure which may discover new islands in polar seas, develop a new gas for man's weal or woe, or add an acre or a dollar to his personal holdings. These are natural ambitions. Their gratification extends his knowledge, resource, and power.

But it is worth while to notice that this extension in knowledge, resource, and power is more often lateral than vertical. It is superficial, not in any contemptuous sense, but as signifying an increase in the length and breadth of the stage upon which man plays his part and a like increase in the arsenal of his stage properties. He is ambitious here; his ambition is a laudable one; and during the last three generations it has been gratified in a measure exceeding the wildest expectations of his great-grandfather. I write these words in a remote village in the South some fifteen hundred miles from my New England home. Yet here as there the extent of man's conquest of his world impresses itself upon me. I came hither swiftly and smoothly drawn by the power of steam, able to read, eat, and sleep as I travelled. At night my room is brilliant with a light unknown except in terrifying and destructive flashes to my forbears. Upon my wall hangs an instrument whereby I can communicate, not merely with contiguous neighbors, but, if need arise, with distant cities and far-sundered friends. The other day a man whirred overhead outflying the birds, presumably upon government scout duty. Last week I travelled over fifty miles upon a mighty river in a small boat without the use of sail, oar, or paddle, but propelled by the expansive force of exploding gas applied in a way altogether unknown two generations ago. In an hour or two, remote as my situation is, the printed story of the world's adventures of yesterday will be put into my hands. In two different buildings in this little town are considerable groups of books available for general

readers and offering them the ripest fruit of man's thought, ancient and modern. Yet all this is but a part of the service of the world so miraculously tendered to the individual man in it; for it says nothing of the mechanical appurtenances for my shelter, rest, and sanitary protection brought hundreds or thousands of miles to my door; or of the clothing that fits my going forth to the heat of the South or my return to the cold of the North; or of my food provided from the distant sea and the more distant grainfields and cattle ranges. The common surroundings of the ordinary plain man tell a story of his adaptability to his world and his power to conquer circumstance the wonder of which grows with contemplation.

Yet the situation is, I repeat, but partly understood until the observer considers that the progress noted here is mainly lateral or longitudinal; that is, it extends astonishingly far in the direction of length and breadth; but it is not of itself calculated to sound the depths or scale the heights of experience.

Upon my table and within reach of my hand there is a group of books. One is a clever novel of yesterday picturing a world filled to the full with all the modern machineries and devices for maintaining life and projecting human powers; filled, too, with laughter and a gleam of tears seasoned by just enough love and hope to give it a temporary vitality. It is so modern that it could not have been written, or if written, read, a half century ago. To-morrow it will be forgotten. Beside it are three other volumes, one containing the tragedies of Æschylus,

another those of Sophocles, and the third the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. These three are very ancient books, written and rewritten in languages accounted by unthinking people to be 'dead.' Yet all are translated anew in every generation, and the last named has not only found translation into practically all the tongues men speak, but is unique in respect of its influence upon a multitude of the minor and several of the major languages. Many of the former have developed alphabet and grammar for the sake of its translation while a similar effort to bring Scripture within reach of the common man has marked an epoch in the history of several of the latter. And this is because the experience depicted in this ancient literature, while it has comparatively little to do with the lateral adventures of man, lays its main emphasis upon his deeper relations to his fellows, his world, his destiny, and God. It is not indifferent to length and breadth; but it holds them to be secondary to questions of depth and height. It lives and it is great because of an intimate relation to the heart and the aspiration of mankind; because it is intensely ethical; because it goes down deep and reaches up high.

The Great Adventure of life is still the Soul's Adventure. This relates itself not so much to life's tools and plenishings as to its complexion, aims, loyalties, and character. It cultivates the fields of time with a subsoil plough and its outlook takes account of the stars. Our definitions of the Divine vary and our accounts of man's origin change; but the old phrase about 'getting right with God'

persists; and it still describes the true birth or rebirth of the soul. Of course, we cannot allow the 'revivalist' to dominate our definitions here; any more than we can permit the sacramentarian to condition the experience upon the act of baptism. But the thing itself is, as I have become convinced, a reality. Sometimes it is the experience of the child more or less conscious of being by itself and feeling like an exile in its solitude. He sees parents and older friends enjoying a peace in believing and belonging which, though partial, is yet real. He views their state as relatively complete, mature, and normal. His own, by contrast, while not necessarily abnormal, seems at least to be partial and immature. He covets their experience. He wants to be born into their state of adequacy to life and death. He seeks their way and finds it, sometimes quite easily as the path is smoothed for him by instruction and guidance; sometimes, in the case of self-conscious natures, with more or less hesitation, pain, and doubt. Sometimes, again, this experience involves a very vivid encounter with a personal Jesus Christ who asks and receives one's allegiance; as often, perhaps, there is little sense of a personal interview with One who represents the love, holiness, and majesty of God. That is taken for granted, as it were, and the convert yields himself to the Will of God as symbolized by such organizations or forms as he knows best of ministry, priesthood, church, or other company of the loyal. In such cases as these we have, generally, little acute and painful sense of sin. Such struggle as takes place is due rather

to some form of self-consciousness or diffidence; to wonder whether the time has come for enlistment, or whether one is worthy or will persevere. But if a clear decision be reached and a definite step taken, the loyal heart will know itself to be in the way of peace.

On the other hand, it is a mistake to fancy that the old-time conviction of sin, with its sense of isolation, unworthiness, and pain, has passed or is likely to pass entirely out of experience. Not much is left, to be sure, of the feeling that God is a hard and jealous God and that his willingness to be placated is hindered by a barrier of decrees which must somehow be negotiated if his awful dignity and state are to be preserved unimpaired. The exceeding sinfulness of sin may seem less excruciating. But with this change has come an increase in our understanding of the evil fruits of sin in the human family. Our sense of solidarity has grown, and with our new views of heredity and the influence of environment, the voluptuary, for instance, can no longer cry, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight.' He knows that he has sinned against the family of man as well as against the Law of God; and among the bitterest dregs in the cup of his conviction is the remorseful thought of the continuing reverberation of his evil deeds in other lives which they have involved and smirched. The man who fancies that conviction of sin has faded from the list of great human experiences simply does not know his generation. It is not so easily induced as a feature of 'revival' services, nor so much sought

after as was once the case; but its elements are still present, more often showing themselves perhaps outside than inside the company of believers.

The so-called 'realism' that makes literary capital of the fleshly and the sexual; the bitterness that characterizes the selfishness of the 'Haves' and the rancor of the 'Have-nots' in all attempts to settle the vexed economic questions of the day; the leaning of the professional reformers toward tyranny and that of their opponents toward unbridled license of speech as well as act; the very 'revolt of youth' which has marked the years since the War and the flouting of standards, often not so much because the standards are in themselves objectionable as because the flouting is a natural expression of restlessness and irascibility; — all these phenomena tell of natures possessing great powers, great opportunities, and more or less conscious of their abuse. In some cases this attitude of somewhat futile rage with one's self and one's world will be maintained until the end; in others it will harden into a pseudo-stoicism or soften into a general self-indulgence; but in some it will take the form of a genuine inquiry, What shall I do to be saved? and an attempt to reorganize life in accordance with its answer. The question will not be always framed in the old Biblical terms nor will the answer necessarily come in the accepted 'evangelical' forms; but there will be a turning of the life in humility and hope away from the superficial activities of the day, good, bad, or indifferent as these may be, in favor of a search for the things that are deep enough to be fundamental and high

enough to be eternal. Wherever such a thing takes place, the onlooker observes a fastening of men's attention upon it as though it had deep and possibly universal meaning. They may not like it; they may indeed flout and sneer at it; but they cannot quite let it alone. The interest roused by a poem like Francis Thompson's 'Hound of Heaven' is not due solely to its unusual structure, rhythm, and poetic force. The merely casual reader has glimpses in it of that Inevitable Presence of the Divine which has haunted men since God first walked in the garden in the cool of Eden's day. That 'Adam, where art thou?' runs all through our literature. It not only inspires Mr. Masefield's 'Everlasting Mercy,' but it appears to determine in some degree the attitude of critics toward it. The critic who is teased by religion and who wants to be rid of it is very likely to develop a peculiar acerbity of tone in dealing with this phase of Mr. Masefield's work; there is a note in this criticism which reminds one of Mr. Mencken's fish-wifely attitude toward Puritanism, or of Mr. Dreiser's sophomoric writing of 'bible' as though it comforted him to pour such contumely as a little 'b' may hold over the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. No one should object. The Bible is not harmed, Mr. Dreiser's own blood pressure is possibly a little relieved, and the rest of us are amused.

Readers of Mr. Eden Phillpotts — may their tribe increase! — will remember, on the other hand, how differently this notable reader of the secrets of man's heart reacts to the challenge of religion. Here is a writer whose professed attitude toward faith for

many years was that of hostile criticism. Mr. Phillpotts long was and possibly still is a militant 'rationalist.' Yet he has probably never done more effective writing than when depicting the ennobling influence of religion upon humble lives. 'The Secret Woman' is a haunting picture of a strong nature in the grip of conscience. Victory is won, as always, at the price of yielding; but it is only three fourths won until at the book's close the protagonist in the conflict meets her husband's paramour and proclaims God's Mercy to her. It is an illustration almost as notable as Bunyan's of the power developed by a plain life, which while relatively indifferent to the activities that I have called lateral, suddenly develops a vision of the things that are deep and a grasp of those that are high.

Even the Freudians and the psycho-analytic host who call themselves by so many names bear unmistakable though somewhat incoherent testimony to the same effect. Here, say they, are our suppressed or inhibited desires in the limbo of the subconscious whence they rise to confound us as Samuel troubled Saul, or Banquo, Macbeth. They are scotched but not killed, bound but not tamed; and their struggles in rebellious captivity lend a new vividness to that sense of despairing inadequacy which has been the nightmare of so many noble lives. 'Who shall deliver me from this body of death?' cried Saint Paul, and spoke for a multitude of his fellows bound to the Wheel of Things. 'Why,' answer the Freudians, 'he who shall reveal what is in bonds beneath and within; who shall not only

release these captive desires, the sullen as well as the desperate, but shall sublimate them.' That is, the only salvation from a stress of living that threatens peace and often destroys physical and mental health, is to discover to one's self and in due measure to others what is really within, to bring hidden things to light, and then to lift them up to a plane where they shall find worthy objects and ends. Thus their force, whether it be called 'desire,' '*élan vital*,' '*libido*,' or some less loathly name, shall become a coördinating and integrating instead of a dissipating force.

What is this but the analogue of Conversion? According to the long-accepted definitions of Religion, conversion is a turning-away from sin to righteousness, involving a sense of unworthiness, contrition, a confession of wrong, a correspondent confession of the right, and one's purpose to cleave to it. It is a putting-aside of the merely worldly as one's supreme interest in life and a choice of the ethical and spiritual as representing the highest good. It is a turning 'from the power of Satan unto God.' Thus, says Religion, it is a sort of second birth.

Philosophy affirms very much the same thing and emphasizes not merely its reality, but its necessity if man is really to come to his own. It is a very modern philosopher who remarks that 'Conversion' or the second birth means the translation of a form of the will-to-power which would displace evil with good.[1] And it is a psycho-analyst of considerable note,

[1] W. E. Hocking: *Human Nature and its Remaking*, p. 376.

both as author and practitioner, who testifies that 'every student of human nature knows in how many countless lives the Christian Religion has made all the difference between mere good intentions and the power to realize those intentions; how many times it has furnished the motive power which nothing else seemed able to supply. Moral sentiments which have been merely sentiments become, through the magic of a new faith, incorporated into conscience and endowed with new power.' [1]

Times change and men in some measure with them, but the great fundamental experiences abide; and among them as an enduring reality is this of conversion, sometimes sudden and revolutionary, more often now gradual and progressive, wherein a man considers himself, his ambitions, his ideals, and his destiny with such effect that he rises into a new experience of life's three dimensions.

[1] Jackson and Salisbury: *Outwitting Our Nerves*, p. 375. Century Company.

CHAPTER XII

SALVATION: A REALITY OR A SUPERSTITION?

The idea of salvation haunts the experience of man. All his greater literature voices it. The Babylonian believed in a land of 'No-return' for whose inhabitants 'dust was nourishment and their food mud.' He hoped and strove for deliverance therefrom. The Buddhist seeking escape from disaster here and suffering hereafter, the Hindu yearning for release from the Wheel of Things, the conscientious Egyptian following a way of righteousness in hope that after death he might become identified with Osiris, all testify to some evil experienced in life or threatened by death against which they would fain be safeguarded. No one can read of cultivated Greek men or Roman women entering a pit beneath a platform on which a bull was to be slain, in order that its blood might shower them with a cleansing bath, without a feeling that these initiates were haunted by something real. Granting, as in fairness one ought, that such an observance was sometimes little more than formal, it seems clear enough that it was in many cases the outcome of a genuine sense of life's maladjustment, of death's threat, and of a sinister complexion in the aspect of the unexplored country beyond.

We wonder as to the attraction of the mystery-societies that played a far larger part in the story of

Greek and Roman life than the casual reader perceives. What could they offer to their members, acquainted as many of these were with the higher thought and accomplishment of their day? 'The best answer,' says a distinguished authority, 'may be given in a single word. The great need and longing of the time was for salvation. . . . Men and women were eager for such a communion with the divine, such a realization of the interest of God in their affairs, as might serve to support them in the trials of life, and guarantee to them a friendly reception in the world beyond the grave. To attain peace of mind, a position of confident hope amid the blows of circumstance, they would make trial of any secret cult which came their way, perhaps of one after another, until they found one to satisfy their needs.' [1]

In more or less pronounced form this struggle for deliverance and safety has been manifested among all peoples. But its character has been generally determined by a man's idea of God. The Hindu idea of God concerned itself largely with substance; the Hebrew idea with power. To the Hindu, *God is;* to the Hebrew, *God acts.*[2] So, generally speaking, in the Biblical teaching man was meant for God and God waited to hear and to succor man. As the idea developed, He appeared as Lord of a Suffering Servant who aligns himself with frail and needy man, taking upon himself the chastisement of man's peace.

[1] Percy Gardner: Article 'Mysteries' in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, IX, p. 81.

[2] Cf. T. B. Kilpatrick. Article 'Salvation,' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, XI, p. 112.

Then in Jesus the Suffering Servant reappeared or, more exactly, appeared raised to the highest power. He so lived, spoke, died, and came again that believers ever after defined God in terms of his grace, mercy, and truth. The preachers of his Gospel proclaimed salvation in his name; and wherever men accepted their teaching and gave whole-hearted allegiance to it, a certain measure and degree of salvation has evidently been accomplished.

But it is clear that the word itself has borne somewhat different meanings in differing stages of man's experience. The blind man or the cripple facing Jesus summed up his cry for salvation in a plea for restoration of his physical powers. Christian, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' felt two things that marred his life and destroyed his peace; the Burden on his back, and the impending Wrath to Come. The former kept him ill at ease, the latter filled his days and nights with fear. He must be rid of the one and he must flee the other. No doubt Bunyan's mighty picture exerted a considerable influence in leading succeeding generations to define salvation primarily in terms of an escape from Hell; and as I look back at boyhood's thought upon religion, this idea certainly seems to have had a place in it. I had never been taught much about Hell; I had not then nor have I since ever heard any preaching about it. But a sense of incompleteness and inadequacy that at times almost reached the proportions of a sense of guilt was there and demanded my attention. It could not be lived with. Something must be done either to expunge or to overpower it. My distaste for the un-

restrained and emotional was too great to permit any outburst of Christian's cries, but the deep essential longing was there. For what? Let us say in answer, For some real adequacy to circumstance here and hereafter.

To the intense religionist that will seem but a cold and distant definition of salvation. Let him look, however, at the first recorded utterance of the urgent question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' and see what in the circumstance it meant. It was the question of an anxious Philippian jailer. He had in ward two members of a strange and troublesome sect. So far as he had cared to notice it at all, their doctrine was new to him. It had gained a certain notoriety in the city through the testimony of a neurotic woman who had followed the men about the streets, attributed unusual powers to them, and finally been quieted and healed of her 'spirit of divination' by the leader of the two. Something approaching a riot had ensued, the men had been haled before the magistrates, who, without adequate inquiry into their civic status or the charges brought against them, had condemned them to scourging. This done, they had been set in the prison stocks. There, despite bleeding backs and a consciousness of undeserved punishment, they had attracted the attention of all in the prison by their good cheer, prayers, and songs of praise. There supervened a shock of earthquake, the disordering of the accustomed routine, the chance to escape, and the jailor's terror as he saw his own life forfeited were the chance accepted. Then spoke the cheerful voice of the chief

prisoner, assuring the desperate man that the shaken world was still upon its course.

Here was a wonderful thing; that a man sore in body from the lictor's rods and likely to be quite as sore in mind because of gross injustice done him, helpless in the stocks but a moment since when the prison walls seemed ready to come down and crush him; a man, too, over whom some worse fate of persecution than had yet befallen was very likely hanging — that such a man should prove so superior to fate. He was not merely unafraid, but cheerful and masterful. Amid the sound and fury of a midnight earthquake visiting a prison filled with Philippi's derelicts, his clear voice and steadfast presence dominated everything. Though Nature herself passed for a moment into one of her most destructive moods, she could neither shake this man out of his invincible adequacy nor even halt his bent toward construction. He kept his heart as well as his head, controlling at the same time the suicidal impulse of the jailer and the mob spirit of the half-liberated prisoners. This the jailer saw, and wondered. He was struck, as shaken persons often are, by contrasted calmness. He coveted the secret of such superiority to menacing fate. There seemed to be an 'isle of safety' where these men stood amid the crash of unregulated seismic traffic and he wanted a place beside them. What did he know of Hell or Heaven? Or how could he organize what he may have thought he knew in that hour of imminent peril? He saw two masters of a hard and cruel lot, not only fearless of death, but cheerful under the

threat of it, which is often a higher achievement; and he wanted to gain and to be able to apply their secret. 'What shall I do to be saved?' was the form the question took. It was as much as to ask, 'How can I be made equal not merely to the tasks of day but to the threats of midnight; how can I attain to adequacy not merely to life but to death and the approach of it?'

The answer of his prisoners is writ large on the literature of all succeeding centuries. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' As we have asked the jailer what he meant, it is only fair to turn the inquiry upon the gospellers who gave so prompt and confident a reply. There was no time nor was that the place to enter upon a comprehensive survey of the Person and Mission of Jesus. To make the attempt would have involved the use of terms, not only beyond the jailer's understanding, but totally foreign to the exigency of the hour. There is no need to insist that he was unintelligent or hard and brutal in character, though this may possibly have been so. In any case, however, there was no call for elaborate explanation about Jesus. The thing demanded was a Way; some method of procedure that would avail in present experience. If it did this, it might well await its justification in reason until the earthquake was over and the doors secure once more.

To the mere philosopher this may seem a crude method of procedure. In the exigencies of practical life it is often followed of necessity, however, and philosophy has more than once profited by the

resultant experience. In this particular case the practical bearing of two believers in Jesus made belief seem reasonable to the jailer; the Way of these men seemed fitted to human feet in an hour of special trial; in the hour of his special trial he sought and took it.

If the critical reader contend that the above illustration takes too much for granted, and bring forward objections to the perfect historicity of this episode in Acts, I should be content to exchange for it such an illustration as that afforded by John Wesley's 'reaction' — in the philosophic slang of our day — to the bearing of the Moravian missionaries amid Atlantic storms. Here were plain people bent on following Jesus Christ. Here was a man of quite extraordinary intelligence and energy, himself a believer in the generally accepted sense and a cleric to boot, who perceived that this group of plain folk had a certain intimacy of practical experience in the Way of Jesus that he lacked. He was still tied to wheels of anxiety and fear — though all his adventurous life bore testimony to high physical and moral courage — from which they seemed splendidly free. He sought and finally found a more perfect salvation than his unquestioned and unquestioning faith had hitherto afforded.

Or, taking a still simpler example out of more commonplace experience, an eminent scholar and thinker was asked some years ago concerning the evidences of Christianity that seemed to him most convincing. He cited various arguments, but, after all was done, added that the thing which perhaps

weighed most with him was his memory of the lives lived by his parents in their home. These in retrospect seemed to him to have been 'indubitably supernatural.' We may take exception to his definition of 'supernatural,' but no fair-minded reader can miss the real meaning or the force of what he meant. He had seen a man and woman living with each other and with their children under circumstances in which deception or concealment was out of the question. Few parents can be successful hypocrites at home, and, in this case, dealing as they must have done with a boy of unusual capacity, the thing would have been frankly impossible. As this mature and highly endowed man looked back over their home life, it seemed to him as though somewhere they had caught the secret of competent and adequate living. Neither life nor death could master them. The Great God Circumstance, while he did business with them, could never count them among his worshippers. If they were less jaunty in their defiance of 'the fell clutch of circumstance' than Mr. Henley, they were even more clearly equal to coping with it. Like the apostles of old and the Moravians of Wesley's time, they felt that their feet, while in the Way of Jesus Christ, stood sure. They were saved and would continue safe so long as they kept that Way. Moreover, this salvation was more than a negative experience; it was more than a passive state. It represented conquest rather than mere escape. It was essentially a dynamic thing, by which they were empowered quite as really as delivered.

After a good many years of observation and experience, in the course of which many new opinions have been formed and some old ones have changed, I record my personal belief, not only in the possibility, but in the reality of such a salvation. Sometimes a person enters gradually into the realization of it; sometimes it comes suddenly. But however gained, it stands for a new security and power in life. On the one hand, fear of the unknown future and the too well-remembered past is in large measure gone. The future is now in a new sense in the hands of God; so is the past with all its sins and follies, and this fact, which once would have caused fear, comforts the soul with a chastened assurance that everything will be done which can be done to remedy yesterday's evil; and that possibly it may be so treated in the laboratory of Grace that 'the soul of goodness in things evil' may be liberated and used. On the other hand, new capacities are developed and new powers set free.

It is clear that in a multitude of cases under the influence of religion change takes place which governs the direction of later life and not infrequently gives it increased influence. There is no denying Saint Paul's conversion. Whatever the exact circumstances, here was a man turned as he thought from darkness into light and from the power of Satan unto God. He came to see that he must cleave to that which he once despised, accept what he once rejected, confess what he once denied, and, strangest of all, love what he once hated. He not only undertook the new journey under the new

flag, but found himself empowered for influence as a missionary as he had never been empowered while a persecutor. With his conversion a positive element began to assert itself and soon became the dominant factor in his career. The man who fancies religion to be mainly a negative matter of renunciation and taboo would do well to examine this career again. Here was no bloodless dehumanized saint, but an enormously energetic and purposeful man, as human as man can well be, vivid, 'red-blooded,' temperamental, aggressive. He cut off, to be sure, much that appeals to the average man. He had no wife, child, or home; no business concerns except the task and wage of his tent-making, the collection of occasional gifts among the prosperous churches to meet the needs of the poor, and the continued possession of a few books and an extra cloak or two. But this was due to no professional asceticism. It was incidental to the new life organized at the time of his conversion. He could not be cumbered with baggage, even such rewarding and helpful baggage as is comprised in a home, because the race he had to run demanded swiftness and freedom; because, moreover, the power which the new life generated not only acted but reacted, and he would not subject others to a reaction which might not be as intelligible or as endurable to them as to him.

Here was a salvation that was real and must be admitted to be real by every fair-minded critic, let his criticism be ever so searching and free from evangelical bias.

Augustine's case was different. There was a differ-

ent temperament, for one thing; and the approach to crisis was by different paths. One feels, after all, that while Paul had his full share of contest with the world and the devil, his eager spirit escaped something of the temptations of the flesh. These Augustine knew. The tendency to make him out a mere voluptuary has gone too far, as has been the case with Bunyan and his playing of tip-cat; but he was of the type of whom mere voluptuaries may sometimes be made. On the side of intellect there was little need of changed conviction. The call came to recognize the practical implications of such conviction as he already had, and to organize life accordingly — to curb desire, to cleanse the heart, to sublimate the impulses. Again the thing was done; never perfectly, perhaps, yet so substantially that the life of this brilliant youth got itself reorganized and redirected. And again, the thing that happened in Paul's case appeared anew. With this organization and redirection of life came a new power. It was not only a power that made itself immediately felt in the Roman world of the fourth century; but it developed an influence that has projected itself into the centuries since. In some sense Augustine developed a universal experience and gave expression to it in the 'Confessions' — not, be it said, in the 'Confessions' as a whole, because they are too unrestrained for that; but in such often quoted yet never platitudinous sayings as 'Thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee.' His problem was the reconciliation of the sinful heart and a merciful God; and whether we

agree or not with the logical processes of his theology, there can be no question but that through his experience he entered into peace; he found salvation; the Way of Life became practicable and promising in a new sense.

It would be easy to multiply modern instances. In the case of the famous Jerry McAuley, who, after his own rescue from drink and degradation, carried on a notable work for derelicts in lower New York, the contrast between 'before' and 'after' leaves no room for doubt. The period of dissipation deserves exactly that name. Here was a man of natural gifts who was scattering and squandering them. He was not free; he could not call himself with any truth his own man. A slave to evil appetite, he was in some measure a means of enslaving others. Then came the change. It was comparatively sudden; and it was very revolutionary. He was converted, and at once began to take the consequences and the experiences of the new Way. There is no assumption of Pharisaical superiority in calling him lost during this period of dissipation. That he was out of the way and lost, as a traveller in a strange country who has missed his path is lost, the most cynical must have admitted. But beyond this his naturally strong human powers were broken, misdirected and scattered. The 'good' which his diseased appetite impelled him to look forward to and seek was really an evil. So he was lost in respect of the ends he sought as well as of the means he used. Nor is there any mere pietism or religiosity in speaking of such a man as 'saved' after his conversion.

His manhood was recovered. He was in a physical and moral sense his own master. He had a will that could once more do its part in the direction of his life. He could challenge circumstance and dominate it. He could not only follow a way; he could, like a competent guide in a forest, map out a way for himself and others. More than this, he developed an unusual gift for getting careless and hostile men into this way of safety and wholeness. Instead of a dissipating he had become a constructive and salving force.

Mr. Harold Begbie some years ago collected a considerable group of examples of conversion under the influence of the Salvation Army and other highly evangelical influences in London. Allowance has to be made for Mr. Begbie's way of telling his story, which, to the cautious-minded, frequently seems to challenge his own credibility; but after this is done, a residuum of undeniable salvation is left, and this is true whether one choose to define salvation mainly in terms of this life or of that beyond the grave. Here, for instance, was a woman born of good middle-class stock, but with some half-hidden inherited tendency toward alcoholism. She was well-mannered, fairly educated, honestly devout, active in good works. By degrees her devotion waned. By degrees, too, fate overtook her. Her father weakened, became the slave of drink, lost his means of livelihood, and died. Brother and sister gave signs of developing the same malady. She, to help in the family extremity, took a position as governess. Already she had formed the habit of

drinking occasionally. As trouble increased, the habit grew. Pressed for money, she converted certain funds left in her hands to her mother's use. She was unexpectedly able to repay this, but knowledge of her wrong-doing and the increasing tyranny of her appetite weighed upon her like a nightmare. There seemed no hope in either life or death. Then one night she heard a searching and revealing sermon by Hugh Price Hughes; resolved by a mighty effort to see and lay her case before him; went, but saw Mrs. Hughes, as her husband was occupied, and, attracted by the grace and friendliness of a good woman, made a clean breast of it. Help seemed won in some degree, but only in a degree. Despite the unfailing friendliness of her mother confessor, the drink habit persisted, though in somewhat mitigated form. At times despair seemed ready to reassert its dominion; until at last, in a crisis of experience that was both spiritual and physical, the power of appetite was broken. It still carried on a guerrilla warfare and it was many years before a peace of genuine conquest was won. But these years of victorious struggle were years of salvation even though hardly maintained. It is as fair and honest to speak of salvation as a process as it is to speak of the victory of the Colonies after the surrender of Burgoyne and the French Alliance or of the victory of the Allies in the late war as dating from assurance of American assistance. They were in a double sense years of salvation because her life was being stabilized in a condition of new organization and wholeness on the one hand, and on the other it had reached a plane

upon which it was able to work powerfully for the higher organization and completed wholeness of other lives.

I shall be reminded that this is but a one-world view of salvation; that it takes account of experience on the hither side of death alone, and that salvation in the ordinary application of the term relates to life beyond death. To which the reply is to be made that it is the life that is highly organized here with respect to its ethical and spiritual content which seems best fitted to meet the challenge of death and whatever adventures lie beyond. Another variant of the same experience appears in the case of a man like the late Mr. Moody. Here was a boy of strong native sense, sturdy character, and great physical resource, but with only a moderate training in the learning and the ways of men. As respects conduct, we may say that the young man never went far wrong. The question was whether or not he would ever go far right. He was a believer in God and in God's goodness and saving power shown in Christ. He would naturally have aligned himself with the world's better aims and agencies. But would he ever become an efficient force for the world's essential health? Would he ever touch men's hearts with the cleansing fire and transforming grace of any real gospel? Those were the questions that were put in the way of an affirmative answer when one day from the rear pews of a Boston church this unformed and uninspired youth heard its minister preach. There may have been no one else in that congregation who thought the sermon a notable one; but it reached

that boy. It set him to thinking; it unlocked hidden springs of feeling and devotion in the heart of him; and as the little grew to more, one of the most remarkable men of his generation was produced. He became the inspirer and leader of multitudes; and this by no tricks of manner or sensational manipulation of mass psychology. He became the man into whom one might have expected that boy to grow — but he was raised to a higher power than was to have been expected. His faith, his humor, his native sense, his intellectual vigor, his ethical passion, his naïve simplicity, his inherited piety, and his acquired knowledge of the sinful and salvable life of man, all were coördinated and merged into the great captain of men's souls that he became. It was no wonder that before his death he felt the impulse to embody this adventure of his mind and heart in schools that should pass on something of the saving experience to others. One has no need to agree with all the definitions and statements of personal faith of such a man to recognize in his 'conversion' the beginning of a genuine salvation for that individual life and its issue in an expanding salvation of souls, and in social agencies reaching to generations beyond one's own ken.

Some years ago I read of a man who on a summer or autumn Sunday was resting upon the turf of one of the great downs overlooking the English Channel. The sunlight and the quiet of afternoon were about him. The peace brooding upon land and sea touched his mood. He reflected upon his own past — not quite with satisfaction, and yet without remorse for

he had led a decent and constructive life. He tended naturally toward the things of faith and toward an ethical habit that made for the wholeness of society. Yet the fact dawned upon him then that he had never definitely aligned himself with the forces of right; that he had never stood up to be counted on their side; that his life had hitherto been an inoffensive and well-meaning drift on a favorable tide, rather than a purposeful voyage. There was something lacking that estopped that sense of the fullness of life which a man has a right to covet. And on this afternoon, as what he might have called 'a sense of the goodness of God' came to him, he was roused to do the needed thing; to coördinate his good impulses, to align his well-meaning activities, to commit himself. In this sense 'he accepted Christ' and 'found salvation.' That experience was a reality. He had never been a stranger to faith, hope, and love; but now he was a member of their household. He belonged to the order of things which made for goodness in a more intimate sense than ever before. The peace and beauty of the day half-challenged, half-allured him into such alliance with their source, that peace and beauty became dominant influences in his life henceforth. He felt, if he were like other men of somewhat similar experience, that though days of very different complexion were bound in due season to confuse the calm that then prevailed, still peace, good order, and weather that could be used for man's constructive purposes belonged to the scheme of things. At least he was ready to wager his life upon that issue. He did wager it; and in so doing

found a support and an inspiration that sufficed for life and death alike.

The reader will discover, I am sure, somewhere among the partial illustrations cited above, a reflection of his own experience. Believer or unbeliever, Christian or pagan, this offer by the Highest of some remedy for the hurt of the Past, some coordination and right direction of the Present's powers, some conquest over the trial of to-morrow and the mystery of death on the day after, is made to us. It is made to us from God — however we define that mighty name. It is possible to accept it; and acceptance spells salvation; that is, such adequacy to the adventures of life and death as shall put fear and shame as well as sloth behind us and make men conquerors; yes, something more than conquerors, if they really learn the secret, win the spirit, and adopt the method of Jesus.

CHAPTER XIII

TRUTH AND GOODNESS

The head of a New England college is said to have put to his students, not long ago, the following questions: What is the use of travelling sixty miles an hour if one is to be as unsatisfied at the end of the journey as at the beginning? What is the use of being able to talk by telephone over a hundred or a thousand miles of space if one has nothing significant to say? What is the use of crossing the Atlantic with comfort, safety, and amazing speed if one is trying to run away from conscience? The implication of those questions is present, latent or expressed, in much of our thought upon scientific progress. Recent progress has been unquestioned and unprecedented. Facts, formulas, and equations have been offered us in unexampled volume; and generally speaking they have stood the pragmatic test — they have 'worked.' The conquest of earth, air, and water has entered upon new phases; and here again it has been no theoretic victory. Men not only had a vision of how the thing might be done; they went out and dug new resources out of the earth's substance; they used the buoyancy of the air as their fathers had long used that of the sea; while of the sea itself they made a broader and safer highway than before, subduing their inland waters meanwhile to the service of light, heat, and power. As we look back upon a hundred years of achievement in the development of light,

heat, and power, there is, no doubt, a certain ground for complacency.

It appeared to some people in the later decades of the last century that this complacency might soon be extended owing to the fact that Science seemed about to answer all questions which man needs to ask, resolve all problems that really concern his happiness, and bring him peace by way of knowledge. It was therefore with considerable impatience that the priests of Science (I distinguish between its priests and prophets) heard the old inquiry as to what one should do to be saved still getting itself asked in sundry quarters. The day of Religion having passed and the day of Science having so definitely dawned, it seemed incongruous to men like Dr. Draper and Mr. Buckle that the language of Religion should survive. So long as Religion had a claim to the possession of truth, it was right that she should speak with authority, that some deference should be shown her, and that her language should have a certain vogue; but now when Science had demonstrated that her own method of observation, hypothesis, and experiment held a monopoly of truth, and since it had long been admitted that it was truth by which men lived, it really seemed too bad to insist upon keeping and using the old formulas.

Yet there was a note of quite unmistakable sincerity about the continued dissatisfaction of the world with its lot and about its inquiry for some kind of deliverance. It did not refuse the knowledge offered by Science. Multitudes accepted it and large

numbers were avid of it. Analysis had split up the rays of light from inconceivably distant stars and so manipulated the result as to tell their composition and approximate distance. Why should it not solve as well the problem of the soul? Synthesis had won astounding triumphs. Many products of earth were imitated or chemically duplicated more cheaply than they could be gathered from Nature and prepared for use. Why should not all the legitimate appetites of man be fed from the laboratory? 'Why, indeed?' cried some: 'So they can be; and the mark of a true scientist is that he regards all appetites that cannot be so fed as illegitimate, and all so-called truth that does not have its genesis and development within the sphere of the physical as an imposture.' I would not be thought to assert that all men of science made such claims. But some did and a good deal of the opposition to the evolutionary hypothesis temporarily roused among theologians was due less to any objection to the thing itself than to the feeling that it implied a denial of that 'homesickness of the soul' which is so closely bound up with religion. If one type of believer made the mistake of other-worldliness, and went about singing

> 'I'm but a stranger here,
> Heaven is my home;
> Earth's but a desert drear,
> Heaven is my home,'

that was no reason why as extreme a type of unbeliever should gain credit for proclaiming that

> 'There should be
> No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;
> The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!'

Of course, the 'scientist' would protest that he had never denied the existence of the earth, whatever he may have done to God and Heaven, and that the world which he recognized was very far from being unpeopled; but none the less the implications of his hypotheses seemed so completely to deny the world which men had known and the souls which they had found to inhabit it, that they were confused by the prospect. Some things they knew beyond peradventure. It looked as though certain of these were going by the board if the scientist had his way. Hence instinctively — and the instinct was a true one — they inclined to question his hypotheses very seriously when they did not deny them altogether. So Mr. Lilly in 1886 accused Mr. Huxley of 'putting aside as unverifiable, everything which the sense cannot verify; everything beyond the bounds of physical science; everything which cannot be brought into a laboratory and dealt with chemically;'[1] and Mr. Huxley at once proceeded with characteristic vigor and good temper to deny the accusation.

What now was the real question at issue? It was largely a question of conduct — of right conduct or goodness, and its basis. Matthew Arnold's blithe estimate that conduct makes up three fourths of life is as suggestive as it is unverifiable. Few things can interest us more than the conduct of our neighbours to us. Nothing, probably, can make so much difference to our personal happiness as the character of our conduct to them. There is something about right

[1] T. H. Huxley: *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*, p. 119.

conduct which all men admire; and when that right conduct is dictated, or even seems to be dictated, by good-will, there is something about it which all normal men love and to which they respond. Indeed, one can go farther and extend this experience to the lower animals. There is something that is memorable and moving in the ability of our cats and dogs to appreciate the conduct of friends. They detect the good-will hidden in a rough address with extraordinary keenness; they remember kindness long; and they have considerable gifts for averaging the conduct of seemingly inconstant friends, setting off the good contacts against the evil, and yielding themselves into the power of those who are sometimes thoughtless if not downright cruel, provided they also show at times the signs of affection. I shall be told that pet animals are selfish in all this, and that, so far as they show friendliness and even something approaching to forgiveness, they are really inspired by a lively sense of benefits to come. No doubt there is a modicum of truth in the claim; but the fact remains that these creatures unquestionably feel at times the incompleteness of their own existence without the companionship and friendly attention of mankind. The muffled cry with which a house cat announced at my bedroom door in the middle of the night that he had captured a mouse, and would be pleased to discuss the circumstances of the chase with me, was a case in point. He could have expected nothing beyond friendly appreciation at that time; indeed, there was a chance that he might not receive even this. But the capture of prey

in that house was not an everyday occurrence; he felt that he had achieved; achievement which was unknown to all the parties interested and capable of appreciation lacked *bouquet;* and so he called me up, and I should have been ashamed not to rise and applaud his prowess. In like case was the little dog belonging to members of my family whom I used to visit from time to time. On seeing or hearing an approaching figure, he would come round the corner of the house; then, perceiving who it was, he would be torn by a sort of ecstasy, longing to rush up and be physically greeted and feeling at the same time the joy and duty of scuttling back to the family with the news. This endeavor to be in two places and to do two things at once resulted in a sort of canine convulsion or dog-quake that was humorously memorable. Yet this dog had little to thank me for in a material sense. I probably never fed him, and beyond talking over the topics of the day together when I called, and an occasional walk in the fields, we saw little of each other. But he inclined to find me congenial, and I, flattered by such condescension, did my best to be so. To adapt Saint Paul's phrase, we added something to each other when in company, so that life together was more the sum of the two lives taken each by itself.

Why was this? Because of a certain good-will that took the facts of our common experience and made them over into such stuff as life could feed upon with zest and appetite.

These homely illustrations have a value as we come to ask how truth is to be brought to bear upon life;

how, that is, it is to be translated into conduct. Answering that question, one turns naturally to Pilate's old inquiry concerning truth itself. Nowadays a good many people seem to regard it as synonymous with a fact or a collection of facts. 'Only provide men with facts in sufficient quantity,' they cry, 'and they will be adequately armed against fate and competent for the problems of experience.' Not much thought is needed to show that this is scarcely so. Facts — mere bald facts — may conceivably be almost as poisonous as falsehood to the mental sloth or glutton; because truth is a matter of relation as often as of fact, and fact out of relation may easily be as unwholesome as a lie. In the case of most of our starchy foods the mediation of fire must be invoked before they can become digestible; and it is perfectly conceivable that a hungry man might starve in the midst of relative plenty if that consisted mainly of uncooked vegetables or unripe fruit. Or, to take a different instance, here is a field that is barren. Its barrenness may in many cases be laid to the deficiency of nitrogen in some one of its many compounds. Yet nitrogen is as omnipresent as atmospheric air. Upon every square foot of the field there rests about a ton of air and of this over seventy-five per cent by weight is nitrogen. Indeed, not far from sixteen hundred weight of this highly valuable fertilizer seems ready to meet the need of each foot of the field. Yet the field can digest and assimilate but a little of it and that little very slowly because of the lack of a medium. If certain seed be sown there, however, of crimson clover or

some of the legumes, a change begins. Such plants have the ability, as is well known, to take up the crude nitrogen into their own substance and work it over into forms that the soil can absorb, can retain for a time, and can give up as food to other plants.

As experience developed, I came to have the feeling that religion had a similar intermediary work to do between truth and conduct. Truth itself may be a crude, raw, and rather indigestible thing. It is one of the commonest experiences of the teacher that youth has little appetite for it. The preacher may set it forth with eloquence and logical competence to his congregation with very slight disturbance of their consciences and no appreciable effect upon their lives. The parent trying to guide a child's first steps into truth's way is often dismayed to discover how little truth-telling simply as truth-telling appeals to the child-mind. Its association with personal honor which means so much to the parent seems never to have risen above the child's horizon. These honest and earnest souls are in danger of undue discouragement because those with whom they deal have so little appetite for the things that to them seem the very bread of life. They have need to remember that to such unresponsive people the particular truth which they are urging is yet only a formula. Within the circle of their experience it has never been translated into terms of life. Dr. Holmes used to speak of the Smithate or Brownate of truth, and the phrase is something more than an incidental gambol of his playful mind. To Truth, spelled with

however big a capital and however close it may impinge upon my life, I may be as indifferent as was the field to the superimposed nitrogen. But Truth seen and felt as an ingredient in my neighbors Smith and Brown, evidently guiding their lives, reproduced in their conduct, and expressed in terms of rectitude or kindness, at once wins upon me. This thing called goodness I not only understand; it makes an appeal to the better appetites of my nature. I crave it and cannot be indifferent to it.

This translation of truth into goodness which all men understand and for which most men have an appetite is then a chief function of religion. Under the religious impulse the universal and the particular or individual come into natural and harmonious relation. To the average man it is probable that the formulas and rules of mathematics seem about as far removed from the realm of the spiritual as anything can well be. But as he thinks a second time and considers that the truth which arithmetic voices in the multiplication table, for instance, is a truth for all times and all places of which we can form any conception, a new sense of its large nature dawns upon him. It was true for him as a child in school; but it was no less true for the builders of the Pyramids and the Parthenon; and if there be inhabitants on Mars it must be true for them. God and man both must recognize this truth. The One upon a throne in Heaven (to cling to anthropomorphic modes of expression) and the other upon his form in school must think and act, so far as thought and act are sane, in accord with the tes-

timony of the multiplication table, dry and bare though it be; nor can we imagine any time when this will not be so.

'But,' it may be objected, 'how can such things as these, true though they are, be translated into the goodness of which you speak so confidently?' They seem to be, it is true, jejune and altogether soulless things. But they cease to be so when caught up into the life of good-will and set to functioning there. The shopkeeper, for instance, to choose an unlovely instance which the mere 'literary person' is always holding up to ridicule, may, by taking thought upon them so that his yard is always three feet long and his pound avoirdupois always made up of sixteen full ounces, become not only a useful servant of the community, but a real strengthener of hearts. I have such a man in mind as I write. He was a merchant in a small way. But it would not do to call him a small man; because he took such account of honor and put so much conscience into what he did. He would not sell some things which he thought to be harmful, though they were in excellent demand. Yet he was no mere precisian, but a kindly, pleasant, humane neighbor to his fellow men. Only a brief acquaintance was needed to perceive the mediatory nature of this man's life. He found in religion something that he believed to be true. He did not philosophize upon it very much; but a veracious instinct told him that this truth needed incarnation before it could find its place and do its work in the world. This incarnation he supplied in a modest way, but in a notable degree; so that in his presence one felt,

not only that the truth of religion was real, but that it was related legitimately and intimately to the 'stable majesty of the moral order.'

I have also heard a clergyman say that he used to get considerable inspiration for his sermons from the notices of mathematical books published in one of the weekly reviews by the late Charles Pierce. The clergyman in question was in no sense a specialist in mathematics. Indeed, his intellectual interests were rather of a literary and classical nature; and he specifically disclaimed any competence to judge the books or the reviews from a strictly professional point of view. But Charles Pierce was not only an accomplished mathematician; he was a highly original philosopher with a remarkable gift for exposition; and he somehow managed to convey a sense of the universal scope and range of mathematical truth, so that the reader, feeling himself to be in touch with the eternal and universal, was uplifted by the contact. The clergyman in question attacked his sermon composition with a higher spirit, not only because his vision of the universal and eternal was enlarged, but because he had caught a glimpse of the interrelation of all truth, and the fact that it is vitally connected with conduct.

Such facts suggest the necessary place of incarnation in religion. They suggest further the absolute necessity of the use of human speech and human figures to picture forth the divine. Anthropomorphism, or the use of human ideas and forms to depict the superhuman, has long been a potent stick with which to threaten the theologian. 'How,' he is

asked, 'is it possible that the superhuman can be expressed in the human? Does not the very fact that the attempt is made discredit religion as something outside the realm of the practical and real?' The wise man will answer 'No.' A thousand things that once seemed hopelessly beyond the circle of man's experience have been brought within it because they were approached and such sides of them as could be discerned were dealt with figuratively until they could be treated literally and on the basis of experiment. Man's mastery of the air was long regarded as a thing that contradicted the experience of the generations so completely that there was something half-irrational in attempting it. So perhaps there was in the attempt to fly as the birds do; that is, by means of mechanically attached wings operated as levers of the third class. There seemed to be no conceivable way in which the thing could be brought about. Yet during a recent year, the United States Post-Office Department maintained an aerial mail service that 'flew' 1,750,000 miles and carried more than 40,000,000 letters without a single fatal accident. It is reasonably safe to say that the only approach to the solution of this problem of flying was through the idea of bird-flight or balloon-flight, though the solution itself was to be found upon another field. Men learned what they could of the manners and customs of machines heavier than air and of those lighter than air; they made extended experiments in gliding; and at last, when the highly developed internal combustion engine suggested a restatement of the problem and supplied the key to

it, they found themselves to be masters of a new element.

Progress may be said to consist in the restatement of old problems so as to render them amenable to the use of new knowledge. It is for this reason that the pursuit of knowledge in the purely scientific spirit and without especial reference to its application to life, has, and is always likely to have, its place. 'All truth is of God.' The Holy Spirit of the Fourth Gospel is the Spirit of Truth; and under his guidance all truth becomes a worthy object of man's search and endeavor. No part of it can be regarded as 'secular' in the sense of being beyond the scope of religion's interest, for this reason, that at any time it may undergo sudden metamorphosis into the materials of right conduct. It must have been a very far-sighted man, indeed, who could have discerned in the first crude internal combustion engine the means of putting aerial navigation upon a practical everyday basis. The two engineering problems seemed completely unrelated. Yet they belonged together.

It is so in the related realms of religion and ethics. Not for nothing have men disputed for centuries over faith and works; and not for nothing have philosophers lately claimed that the final definition of truth was a pragmatic one. Their claim has been too bald and assertive; but there is this basis for it, that all truth may be regarded as standing in such vital relation to the needs of men that finally it will be translated into goodness; by which I mean a harmony of conduct that not only agrees with the

material welfare of mankind, but helps toward the universality of good-will.

It has long been admitted that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing; not because the knowledge itself is erroneous, but because the false pride of it tempted the possessor to exaggerate its extent and so to get his conduct out of relation to that of other men. Without bad intention he became conceited, rash, and ill-balanced in conduct and thus a menace to his society. Recent experience has convinced or should convince us of the tremendous dangers resident in great stores of knowledge and ability divorced from good-will. Never before in the world's history was there such a concentration of its best ability upon the engines and methods of destruction as in the years between 1914 and 1918. It might be said that correspondent efforts were made for the protection of human life and the rehabilitation of broken bodies; but the fact remains that the primary efforts were destructive, and the efforts to save and restore were in large measure dictated by their threatened or achieved success. Never before had knowledge or truth been found in such abundance within men's reach; yet never before had knowledge brought anxiety, fear, wounds, and death to such multitudes, or inflicted such complete material disaster upon man's means of livelihood. In the light of experience during that quadrennium it became clear that mere ability to read Nature's secrets and to harness her powers to the service of man would help the world but little if at all, unless the service were ruled by good-will and unless the ends sought

were those of brotherly love. It seemed to furnish convincing demonstration of the need of some ethical transformation. Truth as truth needed to be lifted out of the realm of mere intellectual achievement; it needed to be raised to a higher plane than that of man's material service if Science were ever to occupy the august place that the dreams of last century had pictured for her. How was this to be done?

For myself, I repeat, it seemed more and more evident that this transformation could only take place under the impulse of religion. Truth, in what may be called its raw state, is too crude and obdurate a material to be immediately assimilated into the world's system. It must be tempered and sometimes melted in the fire of purpose that occasionally attains the intensity of passion. That does not mean, on the one hand, that anything of truth's verity is to be sacrificed or that its substratum of fact is to be in the slightest degree compromised; nor, on the other hand, is passion meant to indicate a mere sentimental intensity of manner or of feeling. Truth is to remain itself; it is to be reverenced as a thing without which any integrity of life is impossible. But it is to be rendered eternal and worshipful by being put into right relation with all other truth, and by a demonstration of its power of translation into goodness.

This was Christ's method especially as elaborated in the Fourth Gospel. It was little use for even God Himself to try to win men merely by means of line upon line, precept upon precept. That method of imparting truth at arm's length found and left men

cold. The gap between the truth they heard and the thing they did was likely to remain as wide as ever. Whenever they heard the truth, they were, of course, in touch with God since all truth is of Him. But they were as slow to recognize his presence and to feed upon this food for their souls as was the field to assimilate the nitrogen. It was when the truth was incarnate in Jesus that they began to see in it something that could not be let alone. It was not only *for them* — it was *inevitably* for them, and they could not escape its impact. Of course, it roused some of them to hostility as certainly as it roused others to devotion; but the important thing is that it appeared in such vital form as to rouse them. There was in Jesus a compelling spirit. Moreover, he is represented as saying that when he went away, as it was expedient for him to go, his Spirit should stay; not, however, as a quiescent element in the world's life, but as a Power for intelligent righteousness.

This Power was to work by means of facts illuminated in the light and fused in the heat of God's militant good-will. He would convict men of their sin — the great and terrible reality of their wilfulness, their shortcoming, and missing of the mark. He was equally to hold up to them the ideal — always a practicable ideal — of righteousness; and he was to assure their hearts as well as their ears of the certain coming of judgment. And all this was to be done in no mere academic way. The whole mighty business was to be set forth in terms of human life. The Book of Life which men were asked to read for

their souls' health was illustrated. Every great chapter in it had its man in whose experience the transformation of truth into goodness was visibly effected. The truth might be imperfectly apprehended and the goodness but partially realized; but the process went on with success enough to convince beholders that here was something real, vital, and of immediate concern to them.

Thus it happens that under stress of cosmic weather 'great souls afford the securest harborage'; and furthermore, that in the growing epochs of our history some notable figure of a man is likely to incarnate the struggle and victory of a generation. It is quite useless, for instance, to speak of Paul of Tarsus as a marplot in the progress of the religion of Jesus. He was in a sense inevitable. The truth in Jesus' message was, as he warned the disciples, of a disturbing kind. The bottles of an old tradition would not hold it. Paul appeared at just the moment when old barriers were bound to come down and new enterprises to be undertaken. He felt to the full the exhilaration of the new adventure; nor was he indifferent to its dangers. Great doctrine must be formulated and taught. The bondage of the old must be broken, but so far as possible without loss of the real protection and guidance which the old formulas had given to conduct. So he not only argued but lived his version of the Gospel. The Law had its place; it had brought home to man a deep and vital moral experience; its form was passing; but the reality of the experience of sin and need and the appeal of righteousness remained and would

remain, to be met in their fulness by Grace, or God's indomitable good-will. The very form of Saint Paul's letters came to appeal to me, with their doctrinal introductions sometimes convincing and sometimes forced, but generally linked by a 'therefore' or a 'now then' to an intensely practical conclusion. This man would not measure his doctrine merely by its immediate pragmatic results, but he was completely convinced that truth was meant to prove itself in life and that the proof would appear when it was tested at the impulse of good-will. Good-will, however, was the prerogative of persons. A person of devoted good-will must appear before the final test of doctrine could be made.

It is always so. The perfection of Luther's good-will was sometimes not very evident, but still he was honestly possessed by his message concerning the right of private judgment and the primacy of faith. For these things he stood in season and out of season, and through his rugged and courageous personality the doctrine got itself translated into certain forms of goodness that have never since ceased to function. The Puritan, inheriting from Luther and more immediately from Calvin, often enough seemed but an unlovely figure, though his unloveliness has been exaggerated for sectarian and literary effect. Yet the Puritan had a hold upon reality. He believed in God enough to feel his presence in his individual life. He feared God enough to be very little afraid of man. And he somehow translated the whole business of his faith and fear into a 'putting of conscience into what he did' in such measure that he

made history and moved his world. His method sometimes bred fanatics, but it must be remembered that the fanatic who has caught a vision of the truth and committed himself to it has always been a mighty engine for realizing life's adventure. John Brown was such a fanatic, and his remark after his capture that he was better adapted to hanging than to anything else was probably literally true. It was when his body mouldered in the grave that his soul began its triumphant march. Then and not until then did men see what the truth that he had grasped could mean in terms of life and death; and, seeing what it meant, they knew it then to be the truth indeed, even though translated by a will that was good-will only in a partial and cabined sense.

It is here that the international and social problems of to-day halt in their progress toward solution. The trade union has its vision of the inequality of privilege and the need of better working conditions. It sees, too, the need and the chance of combination in order that strength may come from union. Here is truth that makes wide and potent appeal. But when it comes to the translation of all this into goodness, the rank and file of people grow skeptical as to whether goodness in the sense of right and fair conditions is really wanted or not; so bitter are the leaders of these movements likely to prove, so untrustworthy in their statement of a case, and so callous to the vast amount of suffering that they lightly inflict upon the public.[1]

[1] The writer seems to himself to see signs that this attitude is changing for the better.

The attitude of employers, especially of combined employers, is too often correspondingly hostile to the general welfare. They see not merely where their personal advantage lies, but they see too the industrial advantage of individual ownership, the greater competence that individual responsibility always ensures, and beyond this, the advantage to both producer and consumer of intelligent combination. They have an instinctive knowledge that combination is better than competition. But they, too, are weak upon the side of good-will. They often fail in their sense of responsibility to the men whose livelihood is provided by the work they furnish and the wages they pay, and they are too apt to look upon combination as a means of protection against the demands of the unions, conscienceless as these often are. Yet more often, perhaps, they fail in a sense of responsibility to the public and are more inclined to regard combination and its economies as a convenient means of breaking down remaining competition on the one hand and exploiting the consumer on the other than of giving the latter the best and cheapest service possible. As a result we live in a state that borders upon industrial anarchy despite the fact that the last century has brought great advance in our understanding of many fundamental facts in economics and the efficient management of industry. We are in possession of considerable stores of unassimilated truth here, because we lack the good-will necessary for their translation into plain prosaic goodness. Good-will would lead the employer to feel a new loyalty to the consumer

whose life-process is in some sense in his hands and to whom he is disloyal if he takes more than a fair price or gives an inferior product. It would lead him to realize that the life-process of the worker is also in his hands and he will therefore desire to pay not the least but the most that conditions will permit. Good-will on the part of the employee must make him too a partner in the general process by which the common welfare is served. I am quite aware that this remark will seem to the reader like a pointless platitude. So much the worse for us all; because it is safe to say that three quarters of the stress and strain of our modern social life might be relieved if, instead of searching Heaven and earth for some new sociological or economic device, we could translate the truth of a half-dozen such platitudes into plain goodness. We fail because the flux or reagent of good-will is lacking, and we go on exploiting, striking, misjudging, and being nasty to one another in general. We hesitate to quote the words 'Love one another,' that echo and reëcho through the New Testament, for fear we shall seem simple and unworldly. The way they open is indeed simple, though not easy; but as for being unworldly, it is so only because the world has been too stupid to see and too cowardly to do. For where this counsel has been followed, a little truth has made life tolerable; while larger knowledge has always spelled progress; because, wherever truth appears, as well in what we blindly call the 'material' as in the 'spiritual' realm, good-will has a curious way of seizing upon it and turning it into the substance of advantageous life.

That process still goes on, though sadly hampered by a meagre supply of this active principle of progress.

Because it seems to me that the religion of Jesus not only makes this principle fundamental in its system, but has been wonderfully prolific in its practical supply to the lives of men, I deem it so far forth worthy of faith and practice.

CHAPTER XIV

AS TO PARSONS

Not long ago in a New England college town a group of fifteen students faced a dozen ministers. The latter were comparatively young men representing the strongest denomination in their State. The former were chosen from the student body of a large and highly influential college. All had been touched by Christian influence; all had felt the summons to personal Christian living and had responded to it at least in some degree; and most of them had given serious thought to the ministry as a possible life-work. The conference itself was held in the hope of confirming them in such a choice.

It opened with a discussion of 'The freedom of the pulpit.' A half-incredulous question was put. The clergy were instant and abundant in reply. And then one among them, calling a halt to the rush of his fellows' eloquence, asked the students to state plainly to the parsons just what they thought of the ministry as an opportunity and a challenge. The reader can anticipate the eagerness with which the request was met. These young men had listened, as so many men listen, with an outward courtesy that in some measure belied their inward impatience. They hesitated for a moment to answer back, eager as they were; but the channel once discovered and adventured upon, they were soon in the full tide of reply. The general character of their counterblast

— for counterblast it proved to be — may be roughly indicated by the following objections: that the ministry was too intangible in its aims, scope, method, and result to permit a man to know where he stood and whether or not he were achieving anything real and vital; that too many of its talks and its tasks were non-essential and related themselves to things remote from life; that ministers tended to become professional and thus removed from vital contact with their fellows; that their clothes, their 'pulpit manners,' their method of conducting public service, and even of meeting personal acquaintances often grew stilted and formal; that their influence upon the thought and life of the people among whom they labor was practically nothing, and in no way to be compared with that of a physician of the right sort; that standing up as they do before congregations and saying the sort of thing that they are paid to say, they could not hope to touch 'the men who *do* things,' and that a young man has a far better chance to influence his age who 'gets right into the business whirl' where action can prepare the way for preaching. So the reply of eager and almost militant youth framed itself.[1]

It was no doubt an interesting and profitable hour that these young ministers and laymen spent together. The reader can picture the two groups separating, each man quickened in his thought and sharing its product with his fellows. The group of parsons go their way a little down-daunted at so

[1] Article by the Reverend R. B. Chamberlin in *Congregationalist and Christian World*, December 6, 1923.

brisk a skirmish with expected friends who acted like potential foes. The students, correspondently uplifted with the *gaudium certaminis*, are eager in mutual congratulation that they have spoken with such frankness, that they have at last partially evened the score between the talker in the pulpit and the listener in the pew, and that they have given the ministers 'something to think about.' Such were, we may surmise, the moods of the day.

It is equally safe to assume that the morrow brought a certain reaction to the more intelligent of both groups. The ministers woke to a new day of sermon preparation, parish visiting, waiting on the sick, instruction of youth, burial of the dead and comfort of the mourners, attendance upon petty committees, and the study of great problems of individual and social conduct — in short, to all the amazing variety of big and little things that go to make a parish minister's work. As the tasks were attempted and some of them completed, it would have been possible to perceive a measure of comfort coming out of them and a serener temper succeeding to the 'useful trouble' of yesterday.

So with the students. They had enjoyed their field-day. Their appetite for paying the parsons in their own coin had grown by what it fed on. They went away elated with their cleverness and courage in facing the older men, in discovering the joints in their very vulnerable armor and in the keenness of their home-thrusts through them. But — but, when morning broke, the wonder must have come with it as to whether they had measured the task of the

ministry by quite the right rule; whether there may not have been elements in its service which they had missed; whether the charge of professionalism may not conceivably have been overemphasized, and the element of worship, to the planning and leadership of which the true minister must give so much time and thought, may not have escaped them altogether. Few characteristics are more engaging than the eagerness of a clever and thoughtful youth to point out what is wrong with the general scheme of things and to show exactly what is needed to set all right. But one of those more engaging characteristics is his frequent willingness to admit that there may, after all, have been more things in Heaven and earth than were dreamt of in his sophomoric philosophy.

I have cited this meeting because it is typical of an experience through which each generation passes in its weighing of the worth and efficacy of the Christian ministry. My own recollections of boyhood form a case in point. In general the ministry was uncongenial. One of the fears connected with 'becoming a Christian' grew out of the feeling that, if I committed myself so far, the act might compel a further commission to be a minister. The calling might be sacred. It indubitably was. But its concomitants repelled me. I still remember the start of pleased surprise with which I learned that Dr. John Todd, a minister of pronounced evangelical views and a writer of books for youth in a generation before mine, was an excellent shot with the rifle and could generally keep his camp supplied with venison when on holiday. Here was a human trait

that appealed to a boy. So in some degree did the books with which the Congregational and Episcopal clergymen were probably better supplied than any other men in my native town. But the solemnities of worship, the constant treatment of grave and soul-stirring themes, the entrance to the house of death, the ministry beside open graves, the rebuke of the wayward, the endeavors to convert the sinner, the standing in some sense between man and God — all this, as I have intimated in an earlier chapter, was antipathetic to a boy of rather vigorous habit, very conscious of his world, and not too anxious to be reminded that there were any issues beyond those of the day.

Time went on. I came to know better various men who were either preparing for the ministry or had spent years in its work. Personal contact with both classes helped to reconcile me to their calling. The best of the theological students proved to be not only very able men who seemed at once sincere in purpose, eager for truth and intellectually competent to apprehend it, but they also provided the most stimulating company that I encountered in a great university. Nowhere else did conversation range over such wide fields as in their society. The broadest farce, the profoundest speculation of which students were capable, and the serious discussion of practical, social, educational, and ethical problems, all found welcome place in that talk. I had never laughed so much, and it was clean even though sometimes foolish laughter. Nor had I ever thought so much and to such good purpose. A new reason

for years of theological training suggested itself as I beheld these men in this term of relative retirement thinking out questions that too often put to confusion their fellows who had enjoyed no such opportunities or who had neglected those that offered.

On the other hand, it was my fortunate lot to know with a fair degree of intimacy two or three clergymen who had spent long years in the ministry and who had abundantly justified their calling. All were marked by their profession. Its *stigmata* were upon them. You knew them for parsons. Yet none had sunk his personality in his service. Each was still his own man and made his own impression. I shall distinguish two. One was of the dogmatic, militant type who could not easily brook differences from the accepted orthodoxy of his branch of the Church — which was not mine. He had his narrownesses, I must admit. But with it all he had a fine sturdiness of mind, body, and character, a forthright look and a speech to match it, that endeared him to me. One did not have to seek far to discover faults of temper and limitations of grasp. But these were not the most characteristic things. The most characteristic thing was that here was a man of significance and power whose life was moulded by his faith.

The other man belonged to a different denomination and represented a contrasted type. While of a nature fundamentally as positive as that of his fellow, he looked out of quieter and in some respects more broadly sympathetic eyes. He had been some-

thing of a war-horse in his youth; but slightly impaired health and a naturally studious habit had cast his lot with the smaller churches and in rural neighborhoods. There he had justified his ministry, working diligently yet without hurry or much evident fret, making friends of all who knew him and his admirable wife, marking out new paths in the methods of instructing and training youth, and doing all with a certain combination of humanity and divinity that commended both to the onlooker. My best acquaintance with him was in his later years and after his retirement when the peace that rested on him and his home possibly challenged my attention the more because of my own active physical and restless mental habit. I should not have said, as Dr. Hodge did of his parents, that here was something indubitably supernatural; but there was something indubitably suggestive of realities that material ambitions, activities, and rewards could not account for. His place in life had not been large or his material gains at all considerable; yet he seemed greatly content. He had experienced the folly, meanness, and sin of mankind; yet he was hopeful for men, charitable toward their sins, and disposed to love the individual sinner. He was growing old; but life had not lost its interest or learning its savor; while death seemed robbed of all terrors.

These were thoroughgoing parsons; but they were men whom it was good to know as they are still good to remember. They could not altogether remove my distaste for the ministry, but they helped to send

me out into the world with enough good-will tc ministers to encourage a friendly as well as candid attitude toward them and their work.

The time has come to ask how much justification the student critics of an earlier paragraph had for their broadside against their ministerial interviewers. Is the task of the ministry intangible? Is it true that a man has hard work to discover what he is trying to do and what he is accomplishing? Within certain limits, Yes. In the work of the Christian ministry there is little to compare with the definite accomplishment of the architect who has designed a house and seen his plan realized in brick and timber; there is almost nothing comparable to the balance-sheet of the merchant showing the turnover of his capital with its concomitant gain or loss. The lawyer and the doctor represent forms of professional activity closer akin to that of the minister because both, in so far as they move in the higher ranges of their professions, give personal service to their clients and patients; and that not only when the former go into court and the latter are ill, since in growing measure both exercise an advisory and teaching function, helping men to keep out of court and to avoid illness. Here, they too face the problem of somewhat indefinite accomplishment. But still their lists of briefs, consultations, and calls relate themselves pretty definitely to the income earned and the advancement gained. A man can say, 'My clientèle has grown in such and such a degree; my cases in court have been so maintained as to enhance my professional reputation;

my patients have increased or diminished; my consulting room is more or less frequented; my insight as a diagnostician or my skill as a surgeon has had such and such testimony borne to it; and my income is pretty certainly bound to record the change.'

Now very little of this definiteness of accomplishment can be claimed by the minister. If he be a wise man, he will keep a record of sermons preached, and with especial care will he record all such services as baptisms, marriages, and funerals, closely related as these are to the vital statistics of the community. His families will be listed and he will note his calls upon them. He will render to his congregation year by year an account of all this service, together with a report of the accessions to membership, the losses by death, removal, or discipline, and the monies raised and disbursed for home expenses and for benevolence. He will naturally make this showing as creditable and as encouraging as he conscientiously can; unless, indeed, it be so poor that its poverty must be emphasized for the good of the church's soul. But the better minister he is, the clearer will be his conviction that the essence of his service cannot be caught and held in a report. It is incommensurable with statistics. The activities that were its outward form were very likely hidden from the public eye. The words that conveyed its message were possibly never heard by a congregation. One of the notable features of the Gospel narratives is the space given to the interviews of Jesus with individuals or groups of two or three. He talked with

Nicodemus through an evening, conferred with a woman of Sychar by the well-side, spared time for memorable give-and-take with the Syrophenician foreigner, and appeared to be extraordinarily moved and uplifted by his conference with a little group of Greeks just as the end approached. In no one of these cases are the results tabulated or is the influence defined. Yet scarce anywhere else is the power of Jesus more clearly manifest and his claim to leadership better demonstrated. The testimony of the thousands fed or the lepers healed is cold and mathematical beside the appeal of the Master of Life's Secrets at close grips with a human soul.

Now this same thing holds true in the life of the parish minister. He will preach and a modest number of decent people will hear. He will ask himself sometimes on a Monday whether they needed his teaching or exhortation; and will be half-inclined to answer his own question in the negative. He will keep on preaching and, if he be diligent in thought and study as well as forthright and honest in utterance, he will at last discover that effect has been produced; yes, quite possibly produced when he thought his utterance most jejune and his effort most futile. For the chances are that it will not be the eloquence of a well-turned phrase that will produce lasting effect, or even the argument of a well-reasoned discourse as a whole; but rather a mysterious combination of a true word, a sincere man, and a needy soul. The wind still bloweth where it listeth and it is hard to tell exactly whence it comes or whither it will go. I knew a minister who

said that once in the pulpit he spoke of an incident in his own life, very briefly, to be sure, but in terms that he regretted as soon as the words slipped out. He went hot and cold afterward for thinking upon what he had said. It seemed as though he had striven for melodramatic effect. He was no sentimentalist, but a man of genuinely sincere purpose, and he felt that had he been in his own congregation and heard those half-dozen words, he must have been offended. Yet, curiously enough, sometime afterward a letter reached him from a woman of cultivation and wide experience of the world, a woman of exactly the type to have shared his own distaste if not disgust for the unhappy episode, who told him how deeply those words had touched her, how they had brought back a poignant and unforgettable memory of her own experience, and how much his ministry had helped. It was symbolic of the mysterious fashion in which the Spirit of Truth works and personal influence is exerted. Had the episode been calculated and arranged with a view to effect, it might easily have had the result the preacher feared; but as a sincere though unguarded utterance of the moment it carried a message and found a mark.

So in private conference with individuals, it is quite impossible to foretell what seed will find good soil and what fall by the wayside. A minister was one day going out to the golf links when he passed a carpenter at work upon some addition to the clubhouse. The man was a stranger, but the parson felt a sort of unwillingness to pass him by as though he

were a mere accessory to the house and grounds, especially since he himself was going out to play while his fellow was hard at work. So he spoke with him for a moment and went his way feeling, as I have heard him say, half a fool and half a hypocrite; foolish because he had said nothing of significance, and hypocritical because he had spoken at all, having, as it seemed to him, simply 'made talk.' Yet, strange as it may appear, those half-dozen words went a long way. They introduced a lasting friendship and considerably influenced, in the event, the course and current of a useful life.

Why, one asks in wonder? Because in reality they were neither futile nor hypocritical. Had they been spoken condescendingly or with any purpose of 'taking notice' of a man who might have been thought by some foolish people to belong to a different social class, they must have been worse than idle and deserved in the Psalmist's words to go down quick into Hell. But, poor as the utterance seemed, it was a sincere expression of brotherly feeling; the man addressed felt the good-will behind the words; and the words told.

So I have heard a minister speak as though his parish calls wearied him and wearied his people little less. If they weary his people, he is gravely at fault, because such weariness comes of too long a stay or too little preparation for the visit. Any man of reasonable intelligence ought to discover in ten or fifteen minutes whether there is any special need in a particular family which he can meet that day; and, if there be not, then ten or fifteen minutes should

mark the term of the call. A minister who stays 'making talk' and compelling his hosts to 'make talk' is on an errand worse than useless. He is becoming that intolerable thing, a holy bore, and the atmosphere of boredom will spread from private to public ministries until his influence is so enwrapt in it as to invite utter asphyxiation. Of him at present I do not speak, but rather of his fellow whose purpose is vital and who has some elements of social tact. When this man reaches the end of a busy afternoon spent in parish calls and finds himself twice wearied, once by his exertions and again by their seeming futility, is it true that the charge of the students has been sustained? Formally, Yes; really, No. The intangibility is there inhering in the task itself as it inheres in so many others which are closely bound up with personality. But the implied futility is not; and for this reason. The greater the value of human effort, the more certain is its exercise to be accompanied by a measure of apparent waste. It may seem a pity that Indian corn has to be laboriously husked from so many enfolding leaves and our wheat winnowed from such a dusty and choking cloud of chaff. But there is no other way. Men have striven to discover a concentrated food that could be entirely assimilated by the tissues. It will not do. Bulky foods that have considerable elements of waste in them are demanded by the body. They help to satisfy appetite; they keep the organs of mastication and deglutition operative; and the waste product itself serves as a vehicle for the excretion of outworn tissue. When a few years ago

the use of concentrated commodities was being cried up, a man remarked that the time would come when enough fertilizer for his garden could be carried in one of his waistcoat pockets; to which his wiser neighbor replied that when he carried out the fertilizer in one pocket, he would probably be able to bring back his crop in another.

There is no royal road to personal service except that of ungrudging expenditure of self and a patient awaiting of results. You cannot invest your capital of effort to-day and, in the language of the market-place, sell out and take your profits to-morrow. Particularly true is it that no man can imitate the speculator who carries stock on a margin, claiming a capital of serviceable endeavor which he does not really own for the sake of a possible gain to his reputation, without inviting utter disaster. There is, no doubt, some gain in going to the houses of a parish and thus demonstrating that each family is remembered. There is more gain in the incidental growth of mutual acquaintance and the cementing of friendships. Yet higher service is performed when a man finds sorrow to be comforted, perplexity to be enlightened, wrong-doing to be confessed, or right resolve to be confirmed. These things do not appear in every home; or, if they are there, the case may not be ripe for treatment; but they will present great and pressing need in some homes, and in many instances the only way to their discovery lies through the intervening calls that seem so futile. Let it be admitted that a measure of intangibility exists here; yet its relation to the definite and the

tangible is often the vital relation of chaff to wheat. The eternal comes by the road of the temporal, and the eternal is so specific and so definite as to be mightily rewarding.

I still remember with gratitude the call of a minister in my boyhood's home after death had visited the family. My natural inclination usually was to go out of a side door if a parson came in at the front; but this was a special day; and when the good man, without the slightest attempt 'to improve the occasion,' expressed his friendly sympathy and then knelt down to pray, commending us all in a few solemn and gracious words to One who was Lord of life and death alike, I felt a sense of comfort as though some one had appeared who was adequate to the need. After a good many years of experience and some meditation upon that unfading memory, I think my sense of comfort to have been well founded; and, moreover, that the influence which the good man brought with him into that home, touching as it did a boy whom he perhaps noticed but casually, was a very definite and tangible achievement. It did not appear so to the minister because he could never have known of it. One of the demands of his profession was that he should do its work cheered by very small successes and rewards, trusting the greater results to God and time.

So far forth then the contention of the students stands. The minister of religion neither expects his wages every Saturday night, nor an opportunity to balance his books every quarter. God seems singularly indifferent here to the collection of his

claims or the payment of his largess so far as time goes; but He does not forget.

The other charges of the young men against the ministry may be dismissed more briefly because they are less penetrating and cogent. It is rather remarkable, indeed, that an undergraduate student should have had the discernment to suggest so far-reaching, comprehensive, and formally true a characteristic as the intangibility of a minister's work and its results. Beside this objection, which in reality only constitutes a challenge to a great adventure, most of the other criticisms fade into relative insignificance. Some men are always asking why ministers wear gowns, vestments, or Sunday clothes? It is a question that one expects from people who have had but a partial experience of life or who have thought its larger questions but partly through. I can well remember my own attraction to ministers who were as little like ministers as possible. But it was a boyish or at best a sophomoric feeling. Clothes are but a necessary and decent incident to a man. I doubt myself whether much is gained by what may be called a clerical uniform and am quite willing to see a clergyman dressed as any gentleman may dress when at his ordinary work or play. When conducting worship, the case is somewhat different. There is distinct gain here for most people in a recognized dress that covers idiosyncrasies of person and of attire. There is nothing sacrosanct about it; but it is orderly, decent, and dignified. A good and learned man once remarked in my hearing that he supposed he could pray with his feet on a table and

his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat; but the point of his remark lay in the fact that no one who ever knew him could conceive of his committing so gauche an irreverence. So the papers tell us now and then how a minister of the type that finds his natural level in the newspaper removes his coat or takes off his collar on some hot Sunday evening while conducting service. It is possible that such a preacher may do good; but in the mind of the average plain man, it will be despite rather than because of his conduct.

At the opposite extreme is the type of worship which to the onlooker seems to consist mainly of a change of holy clothes. He is told that each garment has its symbolic value; but this is so remote that his groping mind can rarely get beyond the symbol; and he is fortunate if he can restrain a smile or keep a quotation from Carlyle's old clothes philosophy from rising above the threshold of consciousness. Here, as so often in such non-essentials, the true way lies between extremes. The black Geneva gown, the surplice, the decent but unconscionably ugly frock coat, all have their dignity that probably helps far more than it hinders the usefulness of the minister. But the point to be emphasized is that they are incidental to the man. If a man be in them, he will not be hidden long from his discerning fellows; and if they are hung upon a mere clothes-rack in human shape, the dummy will show through. Clothes, whether of secular or of sacred cut, cannot help him long.

So there was truth in the objection that ministers

spend too much time in the discussion of non-essential things. But it was not a whole truth; and the illustration used by the objector helps to prove my point. He had recently gone with a fellow student to an evening service for young people and been disappointed to hear a somewhat extended discussion of the Virgin Birth. Now, I entirely agree with him that the Virgin Birth is not an essential question for the Christian. Its acceptance adds little to, its rejection subtracts nothing from, the content of genuine Christian faith. But the fact that every generous and discerning critic needs to recognize is, that, in a period of transition like our own, just such incidental questions come to the fore; sensitive consciences are troubled about them; the very fact that they are in the air gives them a factitious and artificial importance in the eyes of many who a few years ago scarce thought about them and in a few years more will have forgotten them. They must be discussed in order that thinking may regain its right proportion and troubled eyes may see them in their right place. It is true that the discussion is often inadequate and sometimes utterly feeble; nevertheless, men being what they are, it is by means of discussion that light finally breaks into dark places and that ill-arranged experience is organized. Truth can be trusted if it have a chance.

The criticism of the student is justified, however, to this extent; that preachers tend, owing to their professional interest, to dwell upon some of these matters after they have ceased to be vital in the thinking of their people; and on the other hand, in

an effort to be 'popular' they sometimes deal with matters of the day which are quite too petty and ephemeral for pulpit treatment.

As for the claim that men say what they are paid to say, my own observation leads me to think that there is little in the charge. The plain fact is that a good many men who fail to follow the best way they know, yet respect and will support the guide who points it out. A man who is bent upon crime or the gratification of his fleshly lusts at any price will not, of course, go to church or meet his minister out of church if he can help it. But his very imperfect neighbor may do both; and if the minister be decently charitable, he will be regarded the more highly for speaking the truth even in words that uncomfortably search the heart. The grave trouble with many ministers is, not that their preaching too exactly reflects the opinions of their people, but rather that they are too prone to accept the opinions of their professional brethren without adequate examination on their own part; or else, having made up their minds upon a subject which admits of discussion, they proclaim their views dogmatically from the unfair vantage-ground of the pulpit where they are safe from contradiction. Only on the very rarest occasions have I known any attempt on the part of congregations or church officers to put pressure upon a minister for the purpose of inhibiting or of compelling a given line of teaching. I have seen congregations in many instances show great patience — perhaps too great patience — with a minister who was airing his personal views upon some matter

of the day just as though no other view were admissible. To take a case in point, it is fair for the minister to assume, in discussing the evils of strong drink and the legislation designed to check them, that there may be those in his congregations who think quite differently from himself in such debatable matters. I was once present at a great gathering of church folk that gave itself up to rejoicing over the passage of a particularly drastic piece of prohibition legislation. Most of their leaders spoke in a fashion that would lead an onlooker to suppose that they were glad to have a club with which to force their erring fellows into paths of rectitude. They were good and generally enlightened men who would quite honestly have disclaimed any purpose or desire to tyrannize over the private lives of their neighbors. They were sincere in the pursuit of the general good. They would have been justified in my opinion in a modest and chastened thanksgiving. But they had not thought the thing through. In reality it would have been fairer to have expressed regret that such a piece of legislation was required by the sickness of society and to have justified it solely as a quarantine regulation. Men submit to great inconvenience and discomfort reaching often to the contravention of their dearest liberties for the sake of the public health or safety, and we are just beginning to realize how gravely public health and economic welfare are threatened by intemperance.

Half the outcry about the muzzling of the man in the pulpit comes from people who are looking for any stick to beat him with, or else from fanatics who

grieve like Balak that this prophet does not curse their particular enemy loud and long enough. The plain fact needs to be taught to clergy and laity alike that the pulpit and the service of worship afford neither time nor place for denunciation. No man should denounce another's life or views except the other's advocate have a chance to be heard in defence. This cannot often be successfully managed in church. The charitable and conscientious minister, therefore, will prefer the method of patient presentation of the truth as he sees it with the assurance not only that it will finally prevail, but that when it does prevail, good-will, which is so necessary for the translation of truth into conduct, will prevail too. To call a man a coward or a hireling because he does not 'ding the pulpit to blads' with a heated assertion of the points in which his private opinions may be unique, resembles that 'poisoning of the wells in controversy' of which Newman accused Kingsley. The charge of intellectual dishonesty is one which no man can disprove; because if he be intellectually dishonest no assertion that he makes to the contrary can be worthy of credence; the charge begs the whole question.

It remains to consider certain criticisms of our own upon the work of the minister and to inquire finally whether indeed there is an influence going out from his ministry that justifies its continuance to-day.

There is small doubt that the entrance to the Christian ministry has been made too easy for some men, and that in consequence a certain element to whom the work offered attractions that are other than re-

ligious has been introduced into it. Let me hasten to acknowledge at the same time the enormous debt which worship and learning both owe to men who have made their way into the pulpit or the teacher's chair through such privation that they must have been discouraged and perhaps quite thwarted had it not been for the material assistance given them by others. It has always been so. To some men the ministry has seemed to represent the line of least professional resistance; they have followed it; and so far as this ideal has continued to be theirs, they have proved to be but at best 'harmless' figureheads in the parishes that have suffered them. Other some there are, no doubt, to whom the ministry has held out a chance of social advancement. Personally I have found few who seemed to be lured by this petty will-o'-the-wisp; but where they exist, their service to church and world alike is bound to be as feeble as their ambition. Not many can be misled by dreams of success, acclaim, and emolument, because the rewards of the ministry which the world acknowledges to be really worth while are so few. No man, as has been already remarked, must consent to be cheered by such small successes as the minister. Most men enter the ministry with high purpose and worthy motive, although these may not always be the highest or the worthiest. Its work once begun very many of these men find themselves responding instinctively to the opportunities that open and the needs that appeal. The hardest feature of his work, I have heard one man of wide experience say, was that it was never done. His parish was no sooner visited

than it needed to be visited again. A great truth made the subject of meditation in order that he might interpret it to his people proved to be so great that he was renewedly and almost painfully conscious of his own inadequacy to it. Set to be a leader of his people's worship, he was always asking as to his charter for so high an office. Such things keep a man humble; but at the same time the reaching-up to them helps a man to grow.

In this age of high organization, general though often untrained intelligence, rapid transition from one form of activity to another, and ill-regulated haste, it has often seemed to me that ministers of religion failed to realize as they certainly fail to improve the opportunity of the service of worship and the vantage-ground of the pulpit. Worship is sometimes relegated to an inferior place as though it were a mere accessory of the sermon. The discerning reader of this chapter may have noticed that the students who in its opening paragraphs so cheerfully castigated their clerical friends made no reference whatever to their high calling as leaders of public worship. Ministers are not a little to blame for this. It is in no small degree their fault if worship be misprized by their people; and many of our denominations that pride themselves upon their non-liturgical services are suffering from a more or less suppressed irreverence that afflicts their whole body ecclesiastic.

Now this fault which is coming to be increasingly recognized is not to be corrected by any mere extension or variety of worshipful 'exercises' or by the

invention and elaboration of liturgies. Gowns in the pulpit and surplices in the choir will of themselves give very little aid. The spirit of true reverence and the intercessory ideal of worship must be in the minister if he is to inspire his people with it. The circumstances of the day, above referred to, will dictate a general brevity to services. This will preclude wearisome over-elaboration and too great rigidity of ritual, a fault from which the liturgical churches suffer, and it will preclude also the familiarity and loquacity which in non-liturgical churches seriously mar the ministry of so many good men. Fluency is not a rare gift, and it is, moreover, dangerously easy of cultivation. None is more treacherous to the power of the minister. Many able and devout men do not know and never will know the desperation to which they reduce their congregations by their mischievous propensity to talk. They comment on the hymns or their authors; they even announce the hymns in inflated rather than succinct phrase. They read the Lesson and comment as they read until the great and splendid Scripture phrases become mere disjointed interjections in the stream of their verbosity. The comment may in itself be good; but it is out of place there except in the rarest instances. The Offering is collected and once more the floodgates are opened. The appointments for the week are announced, and, though most of them are upon the printed calendar, the talk flows on. Worst of all, and completely fatal to the reverent and effective close of a service, is some forgotten announcement interjected between the

last hymn and the benediction while people are kneeling or waiting with bowed heads. It seems incredible that so many men, who are really reverent in intent and who have, moreover, so high an ideal of the sermon, can rub all the bloom from the devotional spirit of their congregations, and then distract and weary the attention that the sermon should demand, by scattered and rambling talk here, there, and everywhere as the service goes on. Let it be admitted that announcements must be made, or, if made already upon a calendar, that they must be commented upon or occasionally emphasized. The comment will gain in emphasis if the congregation perceive that their leader is speaking under a sort of compulsion and is packing what must be said into a minimum of words. If, on the other hand, he be rambling, conversational, or facetious, one can almost hear the groan with which the congregation's 'How long, O Lord! how long,' goes up to a temporarily deaf Heaven; and one knows that the chance of the misguided man's sermon, when at last it comes, has been tremendously discounted. The talking minister fails adequately to respect either his congregation, his own calling as a preacher, or their mutual service of worship.

The man who assumes, on the other hand, a solemnity of manner and throws himself upon a mere stated order of liturgical service may fail almost as badly. There is and must be in a true service of worship as in a true sermon a sort of sacrificial element that forbids triviality on the one hand and hard formalism on the other. Neither the per-

son, the office, nor the message of the true minister is sacrosanct. He has and he claims no magic or miraculous authority; but none the less for the moment he stands as the representative of needy men in their age-long struggle to be rid of sin and fear, to discern the truth, to choose and do the good, and reverently to commune with Almighty God. It is his task to gather up their sins, fears, hopes, needs, aspirations, thanksgivings, and adoration and to present them before the Throne of Grace; to read to them out of the Book that records the spiritual experience of other ages as an organ of revelation for ages yet to come; and to interpret to them such revelation as is vouchsafed to him for the strengthening of their hearts. This is a task as rewarding as it is solemn when rightly done. But to be rightly done, it must be with such respect for its seriousness and for the men and women in whose behalf it is undertaken that it shall be adequately prepared for; that it shall be as succinct and compact as possible; that it shall move right on from its beginning to its close; that it shall not be marred by incidents, after-thoughts, casual familiarities or any other diversions of the clerical mind; and that it shall be sincere in matter and in form.

Now, granting sincerity of purpose and a reasonable gift for leadership in worship and in the application of spiritual truth to life, is there justification for the Christian ministry? Has the Minister of the Gospel a place, and is that place one which will continue to be filled by men of power? Here the plain man inclines to fall back upon his own ex-

perience as well as to reason from the data provided by others.

I owe a great debt to Christian ministers. The plain country parsons who preached in our village church were true men; limited in outlook, no doubt, but yet liberally educated according to the standards of their day and bent upon leading their people into the larger experience of the truth; and my education is under a lasting debt to them. Among my schoolmasters one parson stands out preëminently; again, a true man despite the failings and limitations that I could enumerate if that were the chief business of memory. But the candid mind like the healthy appetite has considerable gifts for discovering the essential within the husks of the trivial and appropriating it. When I passed on to the university, again, among the teachers who left their mark, not only by reason of their learning, but by their gift for relating the little to the great, the particular to the universal, in such a way that the truth they taught seemed vital and memorable, a little group of men who were educated as clergymen and most of whom retained clerical connections stand in the front rank.

The place of the minister to-day, as compared with his position of influence as an authority on education and conduct two generations ago, is often the subject of unfavorable comment. In some respects that comment is justified; but, on the other hand, many ministers are quite as distinct a social force in their communities as their predecessors ever were; and, generally speaking, in education, in civics, and

in all that makes for well-ordered life together, they exert a liberal and progressive influence. As preachers they sometimes move and mould community life in a tangible degree and sometimes they do not. But wherever a preacher appears of distinct gifts for the interpretation of human need and the application of Christian truth to it, he finds an inevitable hearing. I tried the other day to attend a service in a city church where a comparatively young man was to preach. He had become well known, to be sure, but it was not for extraordinary eloquence in particular and it was not for any sensational ways at all. Yet, though early, I could not even reach the church steps for a considerable time so many were the people waiting to hear his word. The reason seemed to be that the word was alive; that it had power; and that, while it sometimes wounded, it wrought even then with surgical purpose and intent to heal.

Some time after in another town I went to hear a very different type of man. He was getting on in years. He had gone his own way. An ecclesiastic in a sense, he was one who had stood quite outside the line of ecclesiastical business and preferment. He was a somewhat philosophical preacher with little of anecdote or illustration to constitute a popular appeal. Yet here, too, the great church was packed to the doors, and the multitude listened as one man while the preacher discoursed like Paul of old upon righteousness, temperance, and judgment. And one of the outstanding features of the congregation was its large proportion of men and women in that

period of youth when the responsibilities of life are just being undertaken.

Had the student with whom this chapter opened, who objected to the ministry that its preachers never influenced the men who do things, been present, I should have reminded him of a remark concerning this very preacher made to me by a friend several years ago. This friend was a man of sterling quality, considerable experience of the world, and prominence in the business affairs of his town and state. He was in the precise category toward which the student's admiration went out; but withal a quiet, modest man not much given to public appearance or speech. It happened that at the juncture of which I speak he was facing a demand of duty which involved both public appearance and speech. While the thing was on his mind and lying somewhat heavy there, he went to hear this preacher; and when he came away it was with the feeling, as he expressed it to me, that, if he could have faced his duty and done it on that day, it must have been done as he never could have done it before. It is unlikely that a word had been said bearing directly upon this particular hearer's task. But truth had been uttered in such fashion as to relate itself definitely to all true tasks. Men had been interpreted to themselves; shown in their relation to their fellows; and their brief grasp of the temporal had been exhibited in vital and refreshing continuity with their claim upon the eternal. Wherever a man does that, he justifies the calling of preacher, teacher, and pastor. So many good men have shown themselves in my own

limited experience to be doing it, that I am bound to believe that a multitude of others must succeed at least in some degree. I conclude that, wherever a man sees some generous portion of Christian truth clearly, interprets it generously, and is able to bring it home with cogency to the conduct of himself and his fellows, men will seek out his counsel and be inspired by glimpses of his vision. The task of the Christian ministry is difficult. It will be often misprized. It will always be imperfectly done. But its challenge will issue to every generation; it will be accepted by a company among whom will appear some of the leaders and comforters of their day. They have their reward; their work lives after them; and their calling is secure.

CHAPTER XV

WHY IS A MISSIONARY?

Some years ago a little girl just beginning to read, and much impressed by the words 'A. Conan Doyle' upon a book in the family library, put the puzzled question to her mother, 'Mamma, what is a conan doyle?' She was trying to visualize some strange creature named but not known. Her counterpart has more recently appeared in one of the weeklies devoted to humor and worldly wisdom. 'Why is a Missionary?' asks 'Life.' The question leaves something to be desired, perhaps, in respect of grammar, and yet, in its echo of the voice of the street, it has a certain aptness. Here, however, the thing is visualized. The questioner thinks that he knows the subject of his question. His mind's eye is filled with a composite Stiggins-Chadband portrait. He seems to see a man in long black coat; in a neck-cloth that was white, but is so no longer; in trousers that bag at the knees, but fail to reach the boot-tops, while the boot-tops themselves, once elastic after the 'congress gaiter' fashion, have become stretched and frayed by hasty pullings on and off in heathen lands. This effect is completed by a top hat of decayed gentility, black cotton gloves too long for the fingers, and an umbrella with a string about its ample waist. He is armed with Bible or Prayer-Book, a set of well-worn, if not quite outgrown dogmas, and a grim determination to pluck as many

souls as may be from everlasting burning. His methods are a wholesale but rather futile preaching on street corners in regions where such sites are to be found, and in more primitive places such a shifty undoing of native life as robs the gentle savage of innocence, happiness, and charm. The humorous artist likes to depict this man as hopelessly out of touch with his environment, except, perhaps, when he is gazing ruefully over the edge of the cannibal pot into which Mumbo Jumbo has soused him with a view to supper; and the letter-press confidently inquires, 'Why is a Missionary?' The answer is ready: 'He isn't — he never was and is never likely to be.' The creature thus pictured and perhaps honestly imagined is more pronouncedly non-existent than the dodo. For the dodo doubtless once had being and his remains are extant; but not all the kitchen-middens of heathendom shall yield a relic of this caricature, or so much as a rib of his exuberant umbrella.

This, however, is not to deny that the missionary exists, and that he has long played a part on the world's stage. His work underruns the history of Christendom; and since the revival of missionary zeal something more than a century ago, his influence has steadily grown until to-day it is more widely recognized than ever. Before attempting to say why he is, however, let us glance at what he is.

Several years ago, I stood one morning at the break of the after-deck of a Russian coasting steamer anchored in the harbor of Alexandretta. This comprises the easternmost tip of the Mediter-

ranean. On our port bow, half-obscured by mist, rose the mountains that overhang Alexander's battle-field of Issus. To starboard lay Alexandretta itself, a low malarial town famous as the Port of Aleppo and for its shipments of licorice. Passengers were coming aboard, and when passengers come aboard in the Levant, it is a waste of time to do anything but gaze at them. They were so motley a crew in respect of color, dress, and possessions, that one's lips instinctively murmured, 'Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia . . .' Then suddenly, above the mass of dark faces, robes of many hues, and abounding baggage, there loomed a head and shoulders that seemed familiar. The tall figure, the light complexion, the features seen before in such different surroundings, could not be mistaken. He was a man who fifteen years earlier had sat within arm's length of me in the lecture rooms of Yale. A new interest attached to the crowd with this unique figure moving through it. A rather grave, quiet dignity that had won and held the respect of his fellow students was still his. All the turmoil of peoples, tongues, and stuff seemed to leave him undisturbed. He, like his neighbors, had his baggage, though it, with his plans and movements, seemed better organized than theirs. There was a note of competence about what he did that made hurry and shouting superfluous.

On looking him up, after a decent interval to allow for settlement in his quarters, I was greeted cordially, but without especial surprise that we should thus foregather in this out-of-the-way corner

of the world. Indeed, I was the one to be surprised upon seeing his arrangements for the voyage to Smyrna. He had no cabin. Along the steamer's side there was a tier of bunks or stalls. The upper deck formed their roof; the sides of the ship shut them in at one end; while the other end or foot was open. These bunks were in pairs with a narrow gangway running athwartship between each pair, and these in turn opened into the general gangway running fore and aft along the deck at the bunks' foot. There was practically no privacy and little shelter except overhead; no bedding either, since it was expected that travellers would bring their own; and no arrangement for meals, though deck passengers could procure a small amount of hot water wherewith to make their tea.

Into one of these bunks had gone my friend's bedding and such provisions as he had brought for his journey. Of course he was urged to come aft and share the better accommodations of the main cabin, but he quietly declined to do more than take an occasional meal with us for good-fellowship's sake. He had made his bed in a very literal sense and chose to lie in it.

Now there was nothing very remarkable about this. He was the last man to bespeak or expect sympathy because of any supposed hardship which travel cost him; and beyond the entire lack of privacy or seclusion and a possible exposure to vermin, no hardship was probably involved in fair weather. Any man used to outdoor life and in good health might have done the like without hesitation.

But as I watched him, the first impression of his unusual competence and adequacy to circumstance grew upon me. He was not a man who would have been picked out either at home or abroad as an especially 'good mixer.' Easy enough when one had business with him, there seemed to be nothing of the shoulder-slapping, hail-fellow-well-met element in his make-up. He belonged rather to the class which the paragrapher likes to label 'high-brow,' and his manner agreed with his look. Yet, before the first day was over, I saw him on the open deck amidships playing host to a gigantic Turk from Baghdad. The tea was brewed, and as the cup passed with grave courtesy from hand to hand there was talk of affairs in that ancient city where the Turk had been a commissioner of police and whence he was summoned to Constantinople presumably to have some of his shekels shaken out of him. A little later, he was discussing the New Testament with a keen-faced Syrian; while later yet, a group of 'Young Turks,' whose party then seemed really to promise union and progress, cautiously opened their problems and their hopes to him; and, of course, to us from the West, he, with his intimate experience of the language and the people of Asia Minor and America, was guide and philosopher as well as friend. It is safe to say that no one in that ship's company was so well qualified by training, experience, and sympathy to grasp the social and individual problems which it presented, or to converse upon them so intelligently and in language which his neighbor could understand. Some reader may object that

this was an altogether exceptional man. I should answer 'No.' He was a man of excellent natural gifts, developed in the first place by good education, and yet more widely by experience of many lands and peoples, but he fairly represents a very large class of men and women in his profession.

Substituting now this veritable man of flesh and blood for the vain imagination with which we began, the question as to his *raison d'être* may be asked again. Why is this missionary? Primarily because his enterprise suits the genius of Christianity. All great religions help to keep the spirit of adventure alive. Their natural history belongs to the realm of dynamics rather than of statics. This is true of Buddhism and Islam, but preëminently of Christianity. The religion of Jesus Christ has from the beginning been a living and growing power, forever bursting the bounds of language, nation, race, and ancient creed. Its claim has been, not that these were wrong; but that they were partial; they were not enough, and must be supplemented by the application of Divine Good-Will translated into terms of service to every need of all men. By such an adventure, not only would men of all races profit, but religion would itself develop into full maturity.

So the Apostles went through Syria, Saint Paul sought Rome, and Ulphilas dealt with the heathen Goth. The legend of Gregory the deacon and the Anglo-Saxon children in the slave market at Rome, is a case in point. 'They are Angles (*angli*),' answered the dealer in reply to the deacon's question. 'Not Angles but Angels (*angeli*),' said Gregory. 'And

whence come they?' 'From Deira' (as the region north of the Humber was then called). '*De ira*,' mused the saintly punster; 'they shall be plucked from God's wrath and called to Christ's mercy.' 'And who is their King?' 'Aella,' was the answer. 'Alleluia shall be sung in Aella's land,' prophesied Gregory, as he passed on to become Bishop of Rome and in due time to send Augustine to fulfil his prophecy.[1]

Great revivals of faith and doctrine have had inevitable missionary sequels. The Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century had, for instance, no direct reference to the evils of slavery or the condition of the heathen. But its influence would not be gainsaid. It supplied large numbers of people with ideals and purposes larger than themselves. Some of its leaders were driven perforce to fight slavery and to propagate the Gospel. They might have used Luther's words before the Diet with little exaggeration. And in America in 1810 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized. There is, no doubt, in some quarters a notion that such societies, even when they attained to world-wide influence, must have been begun under the impulse of more or less fanatical excitement. On the contrary, the men who organized this Board were among the wisest and best-balanced of the New England clergy. Roused by the offer of certain students to go as missionaries, these clergymen met to deliberate seriously yet calmly upon the

[1] Cf. the legend as given by Green, *History of the English People*, I, 37–38.

problem presented. They decided to take the consequences of their own Christian doctrine by sending out the applicants, and in so doing inaugurated an enterprise that has made itself felt around the world.

What sort of people does such an adventure develop? Earnest people, no doubt, who sometimes verge toward fanaticism; but, generally speaking, men and women who gain a wide and sound knowledge of the world which not only broadens but deepens them. It is probable that the most intimate and certainly the most hopeful acquaintance with men of other colors and faiths has been that gained by the missionaries. They have put the world of learning in their debt by their practical mastery and reduction to writing of a multitude of languages and dialects. In some instances they have developed very unusual linguistic gifts, as in the case of William Carey, an early missionary to India, who became one of the first authorities of his day upon a group of Eastern tongues, but who, because of his humble origin and the patronizing habit of letters toward religion, is still known to many people as a shoemaker. Livingstone's services to our geographies are too evident to need recording. Less is known of men like John Gulick of Japan, who in years of quiet and unobtrusive missionary labor accumulated a fund of scientific knowledge that made him an authority upon certain phases of the evolutionary problem, and an acknowledged influence in both the scientific and religious thought of so notable a Darwinian as Romanes; or of James Chalmers,

who, after spending his active life in the South Sea Islands, met a violent death at the hands of the natives of New Guinea whom he was trying to befriend. He became an intimate of Robert Louis Stevenson, who whimsically lamented that he had not met him while himself 'a boy and a bachelor.' 'How different my life would have been,' continued Stevenson, and the Stevensonian may be tempted to fancy that a missionary must of necessity have dampened the boy's ardor and coarsened the delicacy of his literary touch. In point of fact, when the two men foregathered in the smoking-room of the Sydney steamer during a rough passage to the Islands, the writer found in the missionary just the stimulus that both his fancy and his admiration needed. 'Chalmers,' says one who knew him, 'was a man after Stevenson's own heart. Then he was a fellow Scot, and had for twenty-five years been living through and experiencing adventures by flood and field of the very kind which possessed the most attraction for the author who was afterward to write the "Beach of Falesa" and the "Ebb Tide." A man who had been able to exert some restraining influence over the fierce ruffian, "Bully Hayes," who, when the lives of all in it depended upon his nerve at the critical moment, could steer with the skill of the best natives a boat through the mighty Polynesian surf; a man who had visited nearly every part of Western Polynesia, and who numbered among his friends the chiefs of many a ferocious New Guinea tribe; a man, moreover, who, in the explorer, had never for a moment lost sight of his great mission . . . to seek

to save the lost.' [1] 'I wonder,' wrote Stevenson to a friend, 'if even you know what it means to a man like me . . . a man fairly critical, a man of the world (in most of the ill senses), to meet one who represents the essential, and who is so free from the formal . . .' [2] Stevenson used to say that he hoped to survive Chalmers if only to write his life; 'a man I admire for his virtues, love for his faults, and envy for the really A 1 life he has, with everything heart — my heart, I mean — could wish.' [3]

It is interesting to observe how men of strong natural gifts like Chalmers develop under missionary experience; and more commonplace men not infrequently become notable. A young man went out to India a generation ago whose vocation was a matter of some wonder and more doubt to friends both at home and abroad. He was clever enough, but he was rather harum-scarum, too; and there was question as to his power and staying quality. Yet he was in earnest, and once upon the field, some of the very characteristics which suggested doubt at home made him *persona grata* to leaders of the people among whom his work lay. They liked and trusted him; put their hands into whatever served them for pockets and backed the humanitarian features of his enterprise; until in time these grew into an outstanding example of what missions can do to elevate the physical condition of a thickly populated district, and this man's name became one to conjure with.

[1] *James Chalmers*, by Richard Lovett, pp. 352–53. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 356.
[3] R. L. Stevenson: *Letters*, II, 265–66. Biographical edition.

These are the men who really know Asia, Africa, and the Islands of the Sea. Mr. Tyler Dennett, whose recent articles in 'Asia,' based on wide travel and acquaintance in the East, entitle him to speak with authority, says that just before his first visit to China, meeting the author of the very guide-book upon which he was depending, he asked him for any further suggestions. 'Go to the missionaries,' was the prompt reply; 'they are the only people who really know the country.' So intimate is the knowledge that clear-headed missionary leaders have long been consulted by Departments of State as chief authorities in regard to actual conditions in their several fields, and called on as administrators of relief in time of famine or pestilence. It may not be known, however, that they have often been appealed to by native authorities as arbitrators and intermediaries. Some years ago a man came home from China who has the credit of having made peace during a disturbed time between the military governor and a round score of organizations of bandits large enough to be dangerous, some of which approached the size of armies. Incidentally, he had won fame as a slayer of tigers and had brought home a valuable collection of specimens to the Natural History Museum in New York. A side-light upon conditions in parts of China is shown by the experience of another missionary whose good offices were asked in a similar case by a military governor. The missionary went into the mountains and interviewed the brigands. They maintained that they were no worse than the local magistrate who was

notoriously practising extortion. The missionary reported; and the military governor confidentially admitted the justice of the claim, adding that, if the bandits would confine their activities to killing the magistrate and robbing his yamen, he would overlook it. Mr. Dennett, to whose 'Democratic Movement in Asia' I owe this and several other illustrations, admits that these circumstances were extreme, but they help to answer, in terms suggestive of the variety of his duties, the question as to why a missionary is at all. Because of the spiritual, intellectual, and physical need of a world, he is guide and friend to multitudes among the backward peoples — preacher, physician, teacher, translator, printer, builder, engineer, and scientific agriculturalist. He not only interprets these people to the rest of the world, but to themselves, training leaders for them and showing them what they may become. It is not an insignificant fact that recent Ministers of China to Washington, London, and Berlin should have been products of Saint John's College at Shanghai; or that, during the Great War, Bulgaria's pronounced hesitation to enter into hostilities with the United States, and her eagerness to rid herself of the status of a belligerent, should have been associated in many minds (whether justly or not, I cannot say) with the training of so many of her leaders in Robert College at Constantinople. Gwalior State in India has asked one missionary board to lend it, as government director of agriculture, a missionary who has not only made himself an authority upon the production of Indian cotton, but has actually in-

duced boys from princely families to help fill a silo with their own hands; a strange and portentous adventure. Another missionary has preached the gospel of tree-planting in deforested China until provinces, cities, and villages have undertaken to translate it into practice. Of hospitals, schools, workshops, and printing-presses there is no end. In managing these, no doubt some men undertake too many things to do any of them thoroughly well; but the day of specialization has dawned and with it must come higher standards all along the line. The Dutch Government in Malaysia would scarcely propose to erect nine hospitals and pay three fourths of the expenses of physician, nurse, and native nurses, if an American mission board would supply physician and nurse, unless mission hospitals amounted to something; nor would the Rockefeller Foundation send Dr. Flexner among the missionary hospitals in China, and then back its investigations with its money, if mission hospitals did not represent an open door to the advance of science and the service of men.

I have said nothing of the worth of missions to literature because the promise there is yet to be fulfilled. It is, however, I believe, a sure promise. Letters must finally benefit by this endeavor to interpret the highest truth into the tongues and lives of other races; and no less by the interpretation of other races to our own. Books have already come from mission presses in great numbers, but they have generally been tools wherewith to serve the day's work rather than a literary interpretation of

it. Yet sketches and letters, like Miss Jean Mackenzie's 'Black Sheep' and 'African Clearings' suggest the wealth of material at the sympathetic writer's hand.

It remains true, however, that to the genuine missionary, all these things are blessed incidents. He knows that his primary concern is the digging new channels for what he calls 'The River of the Water of Life.' Upon the banks of that river, wherever it flows, he will tell you that the Tree of Life will grow, bearing all manner of fruit for man's refreshment; and that the very leaves of the tree shall be for the healing of the nations. Those who know the enterprise of missions best, will be the first to credit him.

It is true that some of these men work long and hard only to seem to fail. One such man I remember. He had done valiant service in Armenian Turkey. Like Saint Paul he bore in his body the marks of his Master, for a Kurdish knife or sabre had permanently marred his face. He and his devoted wife spent a long life in their endeavor to translate the Gospel into terms that a backward people could understand and profit by. They organized schools and hospitals, cared for the sick and dependent, made friends of Armenian and Turk alike, roused decadent Gregorian churches to newness of life, interpreted the problems of that distant and distressed people to the western world. A considerable number of their pupils became men of light and leading among their own people. On one occasion, when this man had grown old, he chanced for a day or two to be my

guest in the New England town whence his wife had come. I knew something of his attempts at building, for he had been forced into the occupation of architect and engineer by the needs of his growing work and had reared substantial if not beautiful structures almost unaided except by native carpenters and masons. Just before his departure, I drove with him across the Connecticut River which, near its mouth, had just been spanned by a highway bridge. We had scarcely crossed its 'draw' when the signal was made for opening. His delight and wonder as the mighty bascules rose under electric power were such that I stopped and backed our car as close as might be to the opening section where we sat to watch the passing craft and see the closing of the bridge. His was no common wonder, but the practical interest of a man who had been forced for years to deal with problems of an engineering sort that went beyond his training and his means, and who had somehow managed them; and who delighted to see great things accomplished adequately and with ease. A window was opened for me on that morning into the working of a noble and childlike soul.

Soon after came the crash of war. It involved his work abroad and the people whom he loved better than his life. He was an old man — too old to return, the casual observer would have said. But his wife was there, and he felt that every effort must be made to reach her and to do what might be to save the work itself from wreck. So back he went by such devious ways as could be found through Russia, and arrived in the Caucasus to learn that his mission had

been practically destroyed, the workers driven out, his wife seriously injured in the journey to the frontier, and that death had claimed her a few days before they should have met. They had no children, and had shown instead a parental interest in many of their students. It was quite characteristic of this man that, with his life-work lying in apparent ruin and with neither wife nor child to comfort his age, he should have turned to his old-time pupils who had escaped into another land and busied himself in their service. They were poor and he was poor except in ability to serve; and he rounded out the remaining months of his life in doing the humblest as well as the greatest offices for them. From a material standpoint that life failed; but the man who did not feel his heart beat stronger for knowing this missionary and who did not recognize his abiding achievement would be in sore need of revising his own scale of values.

It is in this realm of the rehabilitation, reinforcement, and restatement of life's permanent values that the missionary renders his real service. He interprets peoples of other faiths to themselves and to the Christian world. Not at first, but finally, he comes to a sympathetic understanding of the worth of the ethnic faiths and again becomes an interpreter. In a world that is avid of material wealth and eager to exploit the resources of undeveloped lands, he stands as the exemplar of those who would give rather than get. His work is rendered doubly difficult at times by the selfishness and cynicism of his fellow countrymen bent on pleasure or gain; and

not a little of the misunderstanding of him and his mission is due to purposeful misrepresentation by those whose schemes are hampered by his presence. Yet he remains and his work goes on. Its more antiquated forms are revised; its social and international aspects are emphasized; its beneficent reaction upon the Church at home increases. The true missionary is, indeed, becoming an exemplar of that enlightened internationalism which the world must learn before its life can become really worth living. This is so because he is fundamentally the messenger of good-will — God's good-will to man, and man's to his fellow. The man who honestly serves that cause has reason for his being.

CHAPTER XVI

PECKSNIFF, CHADBAND AND COMPANY

It was a memorable evening when, as a boy whose bedtime had been eight o'clock or at most half-after eight, I was permitted to sit up until nine to hear my father read the opening chapters of 'Martin Chuzzlewit.' Sleep hung heavy on my eyelids before the appointed hour, but not until my ear had caught and etched indelibly upon memory the picture of a mighty autumn wind; dead leaves whirled along the streets and across the gardens of a Wiltshire village; and Mr. Pecksniff almost blown through his own door into the arms of his waiting daughters. Since that time I have met him in many guises; as Chadband and Stiggins drawn by the same great hand, as Tartuffe or Blifil descending from an earlier generation, or in real life as a pretended tiller of the fields of the Spirit. But never, I venture to assert, has the charge of hypocrisy which Pecksniff and Chadband were intended to incarnate been so commonly bandied about as in the last five and thirty years. It used to be directed mainly against persons who made pious or half-ascetic demeanor cover purpose or conduct that was corrupt. Of late it has been launched against societies or generations until, if the verdict of a certain class of ultra-moderns should stand, one would be compelled to admit that whole eras had no soundness in their bones. It has long

been the fashion, for instance, to call the Victorians 'smug.' I am inclined to assert that we of to-day can give the Victorians very generous odds and then beat them at that game. For smugness comes of a sort of self-conceit which does not, to be sure, always mean self-satisfaction, but which generally issues none the less in an appearance of conscious superiority and in an attitude of condescension toward one's neighbor. Hypocrisy, on the other hand, I take to be a studied assumption of beliefs, manners, pieties, or impieties in which one takes no real stock, for the purpose of ulterior gain, material or social. There is a pietistic hypocrisy where a man pretends to the dress, speech, and particularly to the watchwords or 'slogans' of some sect, in order to become *persona grata* to its members and to profit by association with them. There is an hypocrisy of irreverence or impiety when a man, feeling that denial of long-cherished ideals or principles has become a part of 'the clamour of the times,' flouts these in writing, speech, or conduct in order that, by appearing to be original and daring, he may ingratiate himself with the crowd, win his way into some coveted society, or sell the product of his voice or pen.

The Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century brought real spiritual awakening to multitudes and opened the way to lasting social reforms throughout the English-speaking world. The preaching and singing of the two Wesleys with the influence upon English and American life flowing therefrom were neither insincere nor ephemeral. Mr. Birrell somewhere tells of meeting, while on walking tour in

southwestern England, a decent man to whom he said, 'You seem to be a very temperate people in these parts.' The man stopped, took off his hat, and quietly replied, 'There came a man among us once whose name was John Wesley.'

John Wesley's sermons and Charles Wesley's hymns were realities. A genuine power was in them — power to move, to wound sometimes as surgeons do, and then to heal and bless. It is the fashion to treat those whose lives were thus touched as though they were moved toward asceticism, dourness, and all that is unlovely. Such as have known these lives best know how far this is from the truth. The doctrine of Grace — free Grace — at the centre of this preaching and singing was essentially a joyous one. Song was congenial to it. Its cleansing power possibly removed some dirt that may in certain aspects have seemed picturesque; but it quite as certainly removed abuses that like a canker were corrupting the body social as they had long corrupted the body politic.

Parallel to the Wesleyan revival and the Great Awakening in America ran the Evangelical Movement in the Church of England. At times their streams seemed to be confluent; and all refreshed the current efforts toward a bettering of common life. Indeed, many of these efforts may be said to have originated among those whose sense of man's worth was heightened by evangelical teaching. In the light of it, for instance, the souls of neglected miners in the west of England took on a new value; while they, as the unaccustomed tears coursed in

white channels down their black faces caught a momentary glimpse of the same fact. Their worth as persons in the eyes of God and man alike seemed enhanced and with the new values came a new ethical sense. Wilberforce, the reality of whose 'conversion' no candid student of his life can deny, espoused the cause of the slave, carrying on a work already begun by Clarkson and Granville Sharpe. The 'Clapham Sect,' numbering such men as Zachary Macaulay, James Stephen, the Thorntons, and the Venns, felt profoundly upon religious and social questions, talked as earnestly, and did what men could to translate the truth as they saw it into goodness that other men could use. No rule exists wherewith to measure the outcome of their conferences, prayer-meetings, and missionary societies. But two facts are clear to discerning eyes. One is that vast results, to the end of which men cannot yet see, came and still come from the adventure of missions upon which they embarked. The other is that their sense of life's urgency and the individual's worth, joined to a serious conduct of home and business affairs, developed forces of mind and character in their children and grandchildren which have been a power in the world of letters. One need do no more than to cite the three families of Macaulay, Stephen, and Trevelyan to illustrate the point. To such men Romilly looked for support when he strove to mitigate the savage penal code; and into their inheritance Evelyn Ashley, later seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, entered in his lifelong struggle to alleviate the condition of the poor. The hostile critic will reply

that Lord Shaftesbury was a Tory in politics, lacking in lightness of touch and breadth of vision, and quite unable to distinguish the little from the great in the realm of ethics and religion. All this may be granted. Yet despite all this here was a man in whom the fire of evangelical faith burned so bright as not only to warm his heart toward the less fortunate, but to inspire the most patient, exacting, and unremitting toil in their behalf. Our modern social science has outgrown many of Lord Shaftesbury's theories and discredited some of his methods; but it has only demonstrated more clearly than ever the fact that lay at the foundation of his work. Theories and methods, be they never so good, can avail little except they be incarnate in men who are wholeheartedly enlisted in the cause which these are meant to advance — men who will put conscience into what they do.

That was one of the marks of the Evangelical; he put conscience into what he did. In doing this he inevitably developed a special vocabulary. This in turn was as inevitably symbolic and picturesque. The very nature of religious experience requires, as has been repeatedly pointed out, that the words which set it forth should be 'thrown out' at it. They are words of suggestion rather than terms of scientific definition. The greatest of such words and phrases are imperishable and, like the poetry of Isaiah and the Psalms, are forever enshrined among the world's chief literary treasures. The lesser phrases are often excellently fitted to the use of an occasion or a season; thereafter they grow thread-

bare and out of fashion like a coat of ten years past; yet sometimes the very fact that they have served a memorable purpose seems to give them in the minds of the undiscerning a sacred character; while the too discerning will now and then compel the ghosts of them to walk among the unwary for their own purposes.

For instance, it was the custom of the Evangelicals to make much of free prayer as distinguished from the exclusive use of prayer-book forms. Under the stress of great conviction or face to face with critical problems, it was natural for believing men to cast themselves and their cares upon the promises of God. 'Shall we engage in prayer' meant something real and vital when such people grappled with problems whose solutions were to leave indelible impress upon history. It again meant something when they faced what some might have thought to be the lesser problem of their own souls' salvation. But time passed. The sense of spiritual urgency was a little blunted. In religion as in politics men's minds turned to somewhat different questions. Meanwhile, the phrases remained. Men still asked 'Shall we engage?' — at least so Mr. St. Loe Strachey says — with a sort of unction that repelled fresher and younger minds. Wherever this was done a sense of unreality began to creep in. The critical suspected insincerity and were on their guard against hypocrisy, though, as I shall presently show, the mere use of an outworn phrase is no sign of either.

When phrases begin thus to grow threadbare, two

things happen. Sincere but unimaginative and relatively inarticulate persons — persons, that is, who have restricted individual vocabularies — still use them naturally, honestly, and of necessity. They are forced to do so because this inherited speech is the only language that they know. Their use of it is entirely legitimate and honest, though uninteresting to others except they be clear-sighted enough to see how great a depth of experience may sometimes hide beneath a somewhat stolid exterior and how true a heart may animate a stammering tongue.

The other thing that happens is that designing persons use this same language, not to express their experience, but to cloak their schemes. Chadband and Stiggins appear. Yet in my experience they appear more often in literature than in life. It has been my lot to know large groups of people more or less intimately associated with religious and philanthropic work. I have yet to discover among them an individual who was perfectly consistent or whose speech and conduct placed him beyond criticism. Faults of temper, of judgment, or of faith have generally been easy enough to discover. But, on the other hand, the designing and insincere person who studied the speech and methods of the true in order to further the false has been almost as rare. I have known a few clergymen whose lives while still in the practice of their office were of such sort as to warrant unfrocking; but even here their sin was generally one of weakness rather than of design. They kept on as parsons feeling themselves unworthy largely because they did not know what else to do. Some of

these were brought to book by their brethren. If they showed repentance and hopeful promise of amendment, they went on; if not, they demitted the ministry. It would be possible to make a considerable list. But even in that list the group which had assumed or maintained the garb and language of sanctity in order to further nefarious schemes would be but a small one.

So with the laymen who have prayed or spoken in services of worship. How often have I heard men whose lives I knew to be faulty, or at least narrow and unlovely, essay such a task! Yet among them all there are but one or two whom one could brand as hypocrites. Indeed, some of the more helpful utterances on such occasions have been wont to come from the quite sincere words of men who spoke out of a consciousness of struggle. They might use stilted phrases, while their prayers fell into the form of odd floating liturgies; and this because these often represented the only vehicle of religious expression that they knew. But through the awkwardness or the formality one felt, not so much a sense of falsity as of reality. These men recognized a spiritual side of life; they cared that its culture should be maintained; they were, in very partial and sometimes half-grotesque form, offering their service for its maintenance. The fact that it was poorly done has, of course, to be taken into account; but its poverty of method, its formalism or possible aridity, is a very different thing from hyprocrisy.

Of course all this is so evident that one would hesitate to set it down were it not that the charge

of hypocrisy has been pressed so hard and so indiscriminately against the organization and preaching of religion, against all effort to maintain ethical standards, and against 'Victorian' life and literature as a whole. The preaching of religion and the maintenance of ethical standards are unpopular tasks. 'The clamour of the times' is often against rather than for them. If some people persist, it is fair to assume that it is for conviction's sake. Not much glory and very little gain come to the teacher of religion and morals. So it seems to me that the Methodist and the Baptist, whom the men of Mr. H. L. Mencken's school love so well to deride, may after all be sincere. I do not belong to either group, nor do I agree with some of their views; but upon the whole they appear to me to be quite as genuine as Mr. Mencken with thumb to nose and fingers wagging derisively at all that savors of morality in art and literature.

Why again should the relative reticence of Victorian literature and family life upon sexual matters be branded as hypocritical? Even the modern novelist or playwright, who would apparently have the secrets of all bath- and bedrooms exploited, probably prefers to draw the line somewhere in the conduct of his own home. He says, in effect, 'Here are relations or functions so intimate that an intuition of decency not only prompts but demands retirement. Despite my derision of decency as a convention, the instinct asserts itself even in me. Why, I cannot quite say; but there the thing is.' The Victorian parent who declined to make the

problems of sex his table talk differed from the modern novelist or playwright in this respect that he thought he *could* say. Long experience had taught men that it was unwise to let children play with fire or with edged tools; and he felt that the insistent facts and the haunting mysteries of sex were in that category. That he was too reticent in some cases is probable; and that this reticence covered to an absurd degree some things incidental to sex is certain.

But two things are to be noted on the other side. One is that this reticence was by no means so general as is commonly taken for granted. Some parents, and they were likely to be parents of religious principle and real concern for ethical conduct, instructed their children in regard to the facts and functions of sex. This was done seriously, but not mawkishly. I well remember my mother's reasoned attempts to be explicit with me and my father's assumption that it was perfectly natural for a boy to observe and in some degree to understand what was involved in the breeding of beasts and fowls that went on under his eyes. If I asked questions, he answered them. Sometimes my attention was even directed to matters of the sort. But there was always a note of friendly warning in his manner — it rarely found explicit utterance — when childish curiosity threatened to become too insistent as though in pursuit of the subject for its own sake. It was a matter to be dealt with frankly, but dispassionately and with economy.

The other thing to be said is that this reticence

where it was too nearly complete was not necessarily hypocritical at all, however mistaken it may have been; and that, where a note of warning against dwelling and enlarging upon the theme of sex was sounded by parents who were as frank as they knew how to be, thus encouraging a partial reticence, their act was distinctly wise. The life of classic times certainly did not err upon the side of sexual reticence or continence. The experiment of unrestrained speech and relatively free sexual intercourse was pretty fairly tried out. Any traveller who looks beneath the surface of excavated Pompeii need not be reminded of these facts. Yet the wiser minds of that day did not seem to find the results altogether satisfactory. Cicero was no ascetic; but he urges a friend to keep himself from voluptuous habits of thought, speech, and act, because, if this temptation were once yielded to, it soon possessed the mind to the exclusion of everything else.

A general conviction of mankind, a conviction based on long and often painful experience, assents to this conclusion. Victorian reticence with reference to sex may have been unintelligent — it often was; it may have been timid and foolish in some of its aspects; it may even have become a sort of cult; but it was not therefore necessarily hypocritical. Indeed, it was never hypocritical so long as it was based upon a belief that reasonable reticence was a means of self-control in the individual and of wholeness of life in society. The Victorians — if one can apply that term with any pertinence to the folk of the period from 1840 to 1880, who were really

much too varied and too rich in experience to be thus indiscriminately lumped — may have erred in estimating too lightly the worth of the freedom of man's spirit. Popular writers of recent decades have erred quite as egregiously in underestimating the worth to a man of control over himself. Goethe's remark upon the danger of all which merely frees our spirit without giving us command over ourselves is still worth pondering.[1]

Furthermore, there is a cant of freedom which is quite as easily acquired as the cant of regulation and of reticence; it is equally misleading; and it is equally open to the charge of hypocrisy. The phrase 'Art for art's sake' is a hoary reminder of the fashion in which a pennyworth of honest bread may be used to justify an intolerable deal of æsthetic sack. There is truth in it. The artist in pursuit of an ideal that is really his is not to heed too meticulously every quibble raised by the conventions of his day. But with what Gargantuan mirth might Falstaff himself deride the uses to which the hard-worked tag has been put! What sheer grossness of egotism or of sensuality has it not been made to justify! What prostitution of true art to sophomoric self-assertion or to pornographic pot-boiling has it not served as procurer!

Here, for instance, is a modern author whose rather blundering style has a certain rude power and whose outlook upon the life of his fellows is keen rather than comprehensive. Mr. Dreiser knows the life of the pavement; the heart-secrets of the com-

[1] Cf. Matthew Arnold's use of this saying, *God and the Bible*, p. xxix.

mercial traveller are revealed to him; he understandeth the thoughts of the woman of the streets and of a multitude of others who just miss being women of the streets. The drabness of average lives in small town and big city alike appeals to him and he loves to paint their more sordid aspects, suggesting, when he does not portray, the lusts of the flesh whose gratification affords their occasional variety. There is unquestioned truth in what he says. Some of the praise lavished upon him is deserved. But a fundamental lack of sincerity appears when he is acclaimed by others or acclaims himself as a 'realist.' For the realist, if he at all deserve the name, paints not alone the wart upon the face, but the face itself, and conceivably the soul behind the face; whereas the 'realist' who shouts his devotion to truth so unctuously or so raucously in the marketplace to-day is disposed rather dogmatically to deny the soul, to neglect the face, and to devote his real attention to the wart, piously grieving the while that it is not an ulcer. Let Mr. Dreiser again be our witness. Some years ago he told the story of his first journey overseas. Quite simply and with rather an engaging naïveté he described the impress that an ocean voyage and his first glimpses of the English countryside, of London, and of Paris made upon him. But the most significant thing in the book was its author's obsession with the sex question. He makes himself appear to the reader as one who, while travelling across the Atlantic, finds a chief relaxation in speculating upon the question as to which of his fellow passengers of the opposite sex

has the easiest virtue, and when London is reached, it seems as though Leicester Square and the night life of Piccadilly were really the most significant things in it. He is guest of a friend in the country, and is not unresponsive to the charm of country life as it existed in the days before the War; but here again the inevitable happens. The friend has Paris connections and acquaintances of just the sort to suit the genius of the book; and we are duly transported to the Paris of American and English imagination. I am not impugning the author's eyesight or his veracity. There is much of a sort of photographic reproduction in his book. Nor do I raise a question (though it is hard not to entertain a private doubt) as to his sincerity. The sincerity that I do openly question is that of those who shout, 'See, this is life — real life, at last exposed after so many years of hiding under the folds of Puritanic reticence and Victorian prudishness. Buy and read!' My friend, I am moved to reply, you are mistaken. The reticence that you treat with such contumely has been far less complete than you imply. The Puritans did not practise it. They were mighty men in the art of calling spades, spades; and, if you will read their favorite book (as, to be sure, you will probably decline to do), you will find among the Patriarchs and in the book of Proverbs all the plainness of speech that is needed to bring the facts of sex and its illicit relations home to men. If you will read further the 'Præterita' of John Ruskin, you will discover how fearlessly at least one Evangelical mother took her clever son through chapter and verse of it. If you

will read Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot — it would, I fear, be assuming too much to ask you to re-read them — you will discover that the analogues of Leicester Square and the night life of Piccadilly were well known to these writers, and that enough knowledge of them was presumed to be spread among their readers to obviate the necessity of extended and detailed description. Fornication and adultery were understood in those days as they have been in every age since literature began. This being so, these authors thought casual reference to be all that was necessary, and that good taste, or, if that word offend you, good art, excused them from too meticulous attention to detail. I do not think them to have been insincere or hypocritical in this. Taking age with age, I rather believe that the judgment of the world will validate their canons of taste. Nor do I say that your particular cry for greater license of sex expression is necessarily insincere. Multitudes doubtless like such things. But when on every hand I see sex-problems handled as 'daringly' and 'devastatingly' as may be, with the 'daring' and the 'devastation' spread broadcast in advertisement and review in the name of 'art for art's sake,' I wonder if the real crux of the matter be not found in the exhortation with which your cry in the marketplace ended, 'Buy and read.' The plain fact is that a good portion of the current discussions of sex in our books and papers and no inconsiderable part of the fleshly paintings and novels that are justified by an appeal to their 'art,' are what they are either because of a vein of sensuality in their authors or

simply because such things promise to sell. This sort of self-expression and this sort of bait to buyers offered in the great names of Art and Beauty seem to me to be quite as hypocritical as any device of the fabled Victorians for the protection of their youth.

Nor can I admit the easy claim that religious thought and practice are so honeycombed with hypocrisy as the cheaper critic likes to make out. The literalist in the interpretation of Scripture and creed is as ready to call his 'modernist' brother a hypocrite as the latter is to charge the former with obscurantism. Neither charge is quite fair; that of insincerity the less so because it is the more poisonous and unbrotherly. The so-called modernist is often, indeed, the most sincere of believers in religion's essence and spirit. He may, yes, he often does, believe too in the worth of forms of speech and symbols of faith which have come down from earlier ages. To rule these out of use in worship would violate his deepest instincts. He insists that they be kept in mind and that their essential service in marking a continuity of experience be recognized. To that end he insists further that their symbolic character be admitted. He claims that the symbolic character of all language used to set forth religious experience is essential. It cannot be otherwise. The Resurrection of the Body once referred to a rearticulation of the scattered bones and a resurgence of the disintegrated flesh. This, as was pointed out in an earlier chapter, was the most natural form in which the soul could be thought of as adequately endowed with an organ of expression. To-day the case is

different. Knowledge of the material frame of man has increased; its upbuilding, its breakdown, and its dissipation into constituent elements are better understood. With a recognition of the body's real office, we come to the fundamental truth that the phrase in the creed is meant to set forth. Here is the real continuity of faith; that a man believes instinctively if not imperatively in some survival of personality; and in a provision of some organ of personal expression, some engine or tool for the assertion of his mastery of circumstance there as here. This is a 'body' in the deep and abiding sense of the term — in the sense that survives all change in time and use of speech. And when the man of modern view insists upon the retention of the ancient phrase which proves to have a richer content in the light of to-day's knowledge than ever before, I sturdily maintain that he is quite within his rights.

There is always a measure of maladjustment between the expressions and forms of one age and the experience of another. As they perceive it, men divide themselves into three groups. One would at any cost retain the old forms and mould new experience to fit them. One would smash the old forms and, if necessary to stifle the regret caused by their destruction, would deny the validity of the experience. The third, with larger humanity and a higher magnanimity, is ever seeking a continuity of development which naturally shall relate the new to the old. It so reads history as to show the man of old time as a true ancestor and analogue of the man of to-day. This man, to be sure, did not speak

through the telephone; but when his slower message reached its goal, it may easily have been quite as significant as my message of to-day. He knew nothing of the X-ray and nothing (fortunate man) of the Freudian hypothesis; but the secrets of many hearts were revealed to him if his were really a discerning soul; good-will made for peace and brotherliness then as now, and he found it to be so. When, therefore, the man of to-day cherishes this experience and finds the forms in which his ancestor expressed it to be still significant and still capable of inducing spiritual experience in a later generation, he is not to be accused of insincerity. His act is one of fundamental loyalty and honest reverence so long as he recognizes the symbolic and pictorial nature of the elder word and realizes that it must be interpreted anew to every generation.

'Why, then,' the reader may cry as he approaches the close of this chapter, 'you would apparently rule hypocrisy out of the roster of human failings. What shall we do? What pet name can the German now apply to the Englishman? How shall the essayist of to-day any longer characterize the Victorian? How shall the novelist depict him? What cruelty to the man in the street thus to gag him in the very climax of his passion when upbraiding the failings of the churches and their members! Deprived of this weapon, he would as soon the town-crier spake his lines. And when it comes to Mr. Mencken and his school of critics for whom "hypocrisy" is the sauce of every dish, what "pish-posh" they must write henceforth! How stale, flat, and unprofitable

must be their references to Methodist, Baptist, and Chautauquan; to the Reverend Doctor This and Professor Doctor That; to colleges and places where they learn!'

Let them take heart of grace, however. The case is not so bad as that. Insincerity and hypocrisy are here in abundant measure. I have met them and am as far as possible from ignoring either their presence or their usefulness to free-lance literature. When men in the churches talk of the 'simple Gospel' to which they would have their preachers confine themselves to the exclusion of the great ethical concerns of current society, such as the lot of the poor, the rights of the laborer, the gaining and spending of wealth, the responsibility of public office, and the crying need of better international relations, then indeed one suspects devotion to the simplicity of the Gospel to be a sort of hiding-place from uncomfortable truth. There is, indeed, a measure of justice in the plea, as there is a measure of truth in the cant phrase 'Art for art's sake.' The pulpit is not meant to be a public platform devoted to the discussion of sociology, politics, or international relations. It is meant to be the proclamation-place of God's good-will to men and man's good-will to his fellow; but it is perfectly inevitable that such proclamation should reach into the heart of the world's daily business and carry uncomfortable convictions as well as healing truth with it. For the rank and file of men that preaching is but half done which stops in proclamation and makes no attempt at application.

The cries of recent years about the White Man's

Burden, as though the western world were a weary Titan carrying his backward brethren through the change and chance of time for their own protection and profit, sound a little off the key. That cry is not sheer hypocrisy. Few cant phrases are wholly false. Vast services have been rendered to the so-called uncivilized races by their better advantaged overlords. It is a perfectly fair question whether in some cases the period of tutelage were not a necessary step in development. But the sincere mind will shrink from the 'slogan.' There is too much to be said upon the other side; there has been too frequent exploitation of resources and men; and the Titan's pockets bulge suspiciously.

Not long ago in a company of intelligent people a lawyer raised the question as to why the old-time respect for men in public life, especially for members of Congress, had so seriously diminished in America. The first thing to be said in reply obviously is that the inquiry itself begs a disputable question and that there may have been other times when Senators and Representatives were held in as light esteem as today. But granting the lawyer his fact, it is not hard to see as these lines are written why political leaders so often fail to inspire respect among those who may perforce have to follow them. A wave of what may be called investigation-hysteria has been sweeping Congress. Grave dereliction of duty if not actual corruption lies at the door of men who hold or recently have held high public office. Such suspicions and partial revelations demand most searching inquisition. But to command respect it must be

calm, impartial, judicial. And, lo, the waiting and anxious public hears shrieks, groans, partisan outcries, fustian denunciation. Political advantage, which ought in such a juncture to be thrust resolutely into the background, is so prominent an item in the account as to becloud the methods of investigation and to make its results suspect. The man in the street, while he wants corruption to be exposed and dishonest officials punished, is offended by investigations conducted by personal or political enemies with an ill-concealed purpose to smash an opponent at any cost. And when this sort of thing is done under pretext of patriotic impulse, to the accompaniment of campaign oratory and to the neglect of current and pressing public business, the masses of men lose confidence in their representatives.

A similar lack of sincerity seems often to mark our satirical literature. Take, for instance, a book like Mr. Sinclair Lewis's 'Babbitt.' Here is an attempt to depict the vulgarity and stupidity of 'middle-class' life in a 'middle-west' town. It is an almost inconceivably standardized life; and the standards, at least from an æsthetic point of view, are low. Everybody uses the same debased speech highly spiced with slang that is more or less decayed. Everybody pretends. Men vie with one another in boasting and in 'boosting'; their greetings in clubs and market-place are nauseating in their exaggerated and vulgar bonhomie; at home they squabble with wife and children, and abroad they yield to the world, the flesh, and the devil so far as

their rather tenuous courage permits. Babbitt himself has an experience that goes relatively deep into his shallow nature and in a late phase of it seeks out the minister of his church, since it goes without saying that a man of his type must, in the view of Mr. Lewis, be a church-member. The conversation that ensues is grotesque in its bitter impossibility. Babbitt in blundering fashion opens his budget of half-confessions. This might conceivably be. But the hail-fellow-well-met parson, who is jocular even in the confessional; who kneels with his dubious penitent and makes a pompous prayer; and who, as the prayer proceeds, must needs look at his watch to see if the time have not come to admit a delegation bent on some harebrained scheme of reform, belongs to the realm, not of satire, but of sheer farce. The reader catches himself listening for the slapstick and expecting the custard pie of third-class burlesque to hurtle through the air. Yet this is the sort of thing which in both prose and poetry publishers advertise as fitted to 'stab with a blackguard sincerity.' The approach to blackguardism may perhaps be admitted, but the sincerity of using the methods of burlesque in the name of satirical realism will seem at least open to question. Yet the entire school of those who aim thus to 'stab with a blackguard sincerity,' if the trenchant phrase of Messrs. Boni and Liveright may be repeated, continually commit this sin against honest criticism. Having acquainted themselves with enough of the outward seeming of some phases of life to give a background of verisimilitude, and having learned how to dress

one or two leading characters, they then proceed to fill the remainder of their stage with grotesques and to palm off their performance as realistic satire. The school of Mr. Sinclair Lewis has taken some remarkable photographs of unkempt streets and sordid homes. No one has cause to quarrel with their trade; but when on the basis of such a group of 'snap-shots' hung round with sundry Guy Faux effigies, they call on us to come and see life steadily and whole, they must not blame us if we suspect their perfect sincerity.

They might reply, if they cared to reply at all, that these were but the imperfections of honest endeavor. Perhaps so, but the same thing may be said of the literature and the life of last century whose 'hypocrisy' so enrages them. 'John Halifax, Gentleman,' to cite a forgotten novel as 'Victorian' as a novel well could be, might easily bring a smile to the most sympathetic face if its extremely delicate allusions to the relations and functions of sex were re-read to-day. But it is hard to see where the hypocrisy is hidden. Its author sincerely believed that truth, industry, honor, chastity, and general decency were human characteristics worth cultivating and that they would justify themselves in the long run. She knew lives in which they did justify themselves in adversity no less than in prosperity. She painted a picture of such life, using the language of her day. Was it sometimes too gentle? Let us grant it. And a little too naïve on the one hand and far too sentimental on the other? We may grant that too. It did not 'stab'; nor was it blackguardly.

These aspersions also we must sorrowfully admit. But all together they seem to a candid mind to fall far short of proving hypocrisy or insincerity. Why should the father of Samuel Butler's hero in 'The Way of All Flesh,' sitting by the bedside of his dying wife and holding a handkerchief to his face 'to conceal his lack of emotion,' be hailed as triumph of realistic sincerity? Why should the fact that the man thus depicted was probably Butler's own father be acclaimed as raising the sincerity to a yet higher pitch of worth? Why, indeed, except for a notion that 'sincerity' of the modern brand must needs be blackguard and must perforce stab? [1] Much current criticism, poetry, and the philosophy of the street appears to beg that question so confidently as to rule argument out of court. But argument will not be so cavalierly treated. It insists that present standards threaten to build up a body of letters in which sincerity is likely to become a mere cant phrase in the service at its best of eccentricity and self-advertisement and at its worst of the mammon of pornography.

The fact is that sincerity is a virtue which will not bear advertisement, least of all self-advertisement. For a book or a school of writers to call attention to its own sincerity is at once to render suspect its claim upon that virtue. And when 'blackguard' sincerity that 'stabs' is acclaimed, we can be reasonably sure that the day of such a book or school draws toward its evening. On the other hand, it is quite

[1] The reader will remember the trenchant comment of Butler's very good friend and teacher upon this book quoted on a previous page.

as dangerous to advance the charge of hypocrisy; simply because such a charge is unfair. It involves an ascription of evil motive and is essentially unanswerable. Chadband and Stiggins are likely to have a long career and to reappear in changing guise with each new generation; but they are not the stuff of which either literature or life is largely made; and, if they sometimes use the dress and language of piety, it is only the gesture of the transient snatching instinctively at the outworn trappings of the permanent.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FUTURE WORLD OF MEN

As these words are written, a midday sun is shining upon a little group of disappointed and disillusioned people in the East and a morning light is rising upon a like group in the West of the United States. 'Is this so remarkable?' asks the reader, thinking that the disappointed and disillusioned are always with us. But let him consider the nature of this particular disappointment. It is that the sun should shine at all; that it should ever shine again; that the solar system should be still intact; that day unto day should still utter speech. These people had been led to expect the end of all material things some three days ago. Their prophets had spoken. The secrets of the Book had been revealed. The cup of the world's wickedness was full; and at such an hour the trumpet was to sound, the elements to melt with fervent heat, the Great White Throne to appear and the nations be brought to judgment. The appointed time came; but, lo, the night, like other nights, had not only its evening and its midnight, but its morning. Judgment halted. The pillars of the earth were unshaken. Could it be that they were still the Lord's and that He had set the world permanently upon them? These smitten souls could scarce believe it. Some, no doubt, will begin to recast their figures and to recalculate the Number of the Beast;

others will give over an attempt that experience has rendered vain, exchanging an unreasoning faith for an unbelief as unreasoning and perhaps more bitter.

Of course the newspapers have made great play with all this, setting forth, as newspapers will, its crude and absurd features, and missing, as newspapers so generally do, its underlying elements of pathos and appeal. For in reality these poor souls with their hysteric expectation and inevitable disillusionment are only a step removed from many of those who so superciliously make journalistic capital of them. Both are exponents of the theory that the world is practically incapable of permanent betterment. Current journalism might not accept this as an adequate definition of its creed. It might very well say that it saw evidences of improvement in human conditions on every hand, and that it prided itself upon being a chief instrument in perpetuating and furthering it; and this would be true of a portion of the newspaper press. But it is also true that an able and widely influential section of that press, identified on the one hand with what the cant of the day calls 'Big Business,' or on the other with the professional military services and their equipment, is pretty consistently hostile toward specific plans for human betterment and as cynical toward its ideals.

A single illustration will make my meaning clear. Not long ago, a financial journal of generally high character took occasion to refer editorially to one of the best considered plans for preserving international peace. This plan was sponsored by an em-

inent American scholar, professor in a university of the first rank, a recognized authority upon the history of nations, a man who, moreover, had made an especial study of the conditions underlying the recent War, and the accredited representative of a great foundation for the scientific study of questions of international peace. This man and others of like quality had evolved a plan that promised materially to lessen the menace of war. It was a plan which conserved the rights of individual nations and reduced the danger of 'entangling alliances' to a minimum. No one could say that it was perfect. But any generous man who felt the need and understood the sanity and scientific knowledge that were behind the proposal must feel impelled, it would seem, to pay it the tribute of a hopeful respect. See now how our esteemed contemporary dealt with it. The editorial mention was rather casual and appropriately supercilious. It was the plan of Professor Shotwell, 'whoever he may be.' It is scarcely credible that the editorial writer of the journal in question should not have known who Professor Shotwell is; but his cavalier reference was exactly fitted to define the attitude of a highly influential section of the public and its press. Not to know who the eminent scholar and publicist is would have been to argue one's self unknown; but to pretend ignorance and to pretend with an assumption that any one who should deal hopefully with plans for preserving the world's peace, must from that very fact be too idealistic if not too fanatical to make him of any consequence, wrote this critic

down as fundamentally akin to those watchers of the skies who expected the world's end on February 5, 1925.

It is true that they reached their common ground by different paths. The watcher for the Second Coming had a subjective faith that looked within for the evidences of the true and the permanent. The outward frame of things was destined to continue during time. No influence that he or his faith could exert was likely to better it. It was bad and it might become worse. In any case it was one to him, for the world hastened toward a day of doom and was bound to disappear amid universal material catastrophe. What use then to expect progress or even to hope for it? Enough for the believer that he bear witness against the world and bid his fellows flee from the wrath to come. Something of this idea was developed in Hebrew thought as that gifted but stricken people came to realize how little chance there was that their law would be universally recognized and their genius rule the world except the present order should come to a catastrophic end. Something of the same mingling of celestial hope and mundane despair gleams through the scattered utterances of Jesus and his disciples, though to make these broken passages of doom normal for their general teaching is not only to attach undue importance to them, but to overlook other words of more frequent utterance and worth a higher emphasis. They set forth the mood of men whose eyes are temporarily blinded by the dust of circumstance to the evidences of the Patience of God. These men

believe in a new Heaven if not a new earth and the dwelling of righteousness therein, but they see their ideals realized only through the intervention of a divine violence.

On the other hand marches the allied army of those who have for this world no realizable moral ideals at all. Their faith, in so far as they have any, is an objective one. It rests in the temporal and the obvious. This material frame is at least to outlast *their* time, though, to be sure, in some other it may melt in the fervent heat of a celestial catastrophe or slowly cool into lunar deadness. Human nature, too, will remain much the same. Its really dependable motives are those of greed and pleasure. Jealousy and hate are to be counted on; magnanimity and self-sacrifice may, indeed, find individual illustration here and there, but only here and there. It is too much to hope and quite too much to ask that masses of men should ever sacrifice their material advantage at the behest of a fundamental goodwill or permit the ideals of a higher equity to mould their industrial, commercial, and political policies.

What was a plain man to say to these two views, so different on the surface, so alike in essence? Must one thus despair of his world, looking out upon the goodly frame of things and finding its seeming goodliness a mockery — a flimsy and combustible stage-curtain soon or late to be rolled up in fire? Looking, too, upon the ideals and higher hopes of the men about him and feeling that they are but a teasing deception and a snare, man standing like a moral Tantalus in the presence of things that in his best

moments he believes to represent the highest and most lasting good for himself and his kind, only to see this fade into the fabric of a dream when he attempts to grasp it? This was a question whose roots sank deep into life. Such an answer to it must substantially influence the worth of one's stay here. An instinct not unlike that which causes one to reject food of an unwholesome taste and savor refused this adventure. It was not merely that one did not 'like' it. There are various sorts of eminently wholesome food that the individual may not 'like.' But there are also certain substances from which one shrinks with an instinctive certainty that they are hostile to life. So here, I for one could not but feel that such a theory as that held by the millenarian upon the one hand and by the cynical journalist upon the other was wrong in the essential pessimism that characterized it because it robbed life of the very secret that offered it an adventure and deprived man of the powers that made him chiefly eminent. Mr. Henley might boast never so loudly of the captaincy of his soul; but it was a poor sort of leadership whose highest utterance was a mere shout of defiance. There might, after all, be a living God whose purpose in the world was not utterly to fail. On the remotest chance of this, so momentous must the truth of it be if once established, it would seem wise to keep the ways of communication with Him open, and to train one's eyes to recognize his approach in the fields of time as well as in the clouds of heaven. There might be such a thing as a progressive realization of the higher ideals of men.

Why not? The lust of the eye and the desires of the flesh suggested things not always easy of attainment, but still possible to the enterprising man. Had not a host of modern novelists spoken in the name of 'realism' to that effect? Why should reality and realization be denied to those other ambitions that many admit to be ethical and some call spiritual? That these ambitions are difficult to realize may be admitted. But why brand their realization as impossible? Certainly this was not to be permitted until the adventure had been studied, and, if it might be, tried.

Is it possible, then, to expect and work hopefully for a better world? My own conviction has come to be that the affirmative answer as a theory fits life better than any other, and that the enterprise undertaken in consequence gives the greatest zest to living. But in justifying this conclusion it will be needful to define a little.

What do we mean by 'world'? In the first place, obviously, the material frame in which the picture of human life is set. In the next there is the world in the New Testament sense; human society as it organizes itself apart from God — largely a system of coöperative guilt with limited liability, to quote Dean Inge's pungent words again.[1] And finally there is the inclusive world of each man's experience and all men's abode wherein the past and present meet and whence the future flows; where the material and the spiritual interplay, sometimes attracting and sometimes repelling each other; where man's

[1] 'Religion and the State,' *Hibbert Journal*, p. 655. July, 1920.

necessary work is done and his material livelihood gained. What chance is there that anything called progress — at least progress that involves betterment — should develop here; and, granting the possibility, what evidences of its existence appear?

No intelligent person is likely to question the fact of progress in the first of these realms. A chief characteristic of the nineteenth century was man's reading of Nature's secrets and his conquest of her powers; and this progressive domination has gone on with accelerated speed during the first quarter of the present century. So general has been our recognition of these facts, indeed, and so complacent our boasting, that one hesitates to particularize in this field for fear of being thought a bore. For generations readers found in Genesis the commission that bade man subdue the earth to his service; but they passed it by as incidental to his creation. Of late it has appeared in a new light as an essential element in his manhood. He cannot bilk the inward 'must' of the material world's challenge and remain a man in the best sense. So long as one of the poles is unvisited or a Mount Everest unscaled, some representative man must make his vicarious sacrifice of effort and perhaps of life in behalf of his fellows. Once it was a great feat to cross an ocean and an historical achievement to circumnavigate the globe. *Cui bono?* one might conceivably have cried to Columbus and Magellan. They had their answers ready; and the answers may well have been honest. To discover and annex new lands, to win personal fame and enhance national prestige, and to evan-

gelize the heathen were all natural ambitions of the time. But the true answer was to be found in the haunting desire and indomitable will of man to be master of his world. Whether this mastery shall turn to good or ill is for the moment a secondary consideration to him. Cortez and Pizarro explore and conquer new lands, thirsty for fame, gold, and material dominion. Livingstone uses his iron frame like a key to unlock the geographical and ethnological secrets of Africa in the devoted hope that the rodent ulcer of the slave trade might be healed and the light of the Gospel break in upon heathen darkness. Such hopes were cherished by these men as incidental to their struggle with circumstance. But the immediate thing, because they were made in the creative image of God, was to achieve — to master environment. It has always been so in the process of man's conquest of his world. No instructed mind dare say what is impossible to him in the field of scientific adventure on the one hand, or whether on the other the results of any specific adventure shall make for human weal or woe. The ocean was no sooner crossed, for instance, than it gradually became a highway linking with extraordinary facility, because it can be traversed in so many directions, the lands it once divided. Great circle sailing came to shorten its routes in defiance of what the man in the street took to be 'common sense.' It grew to be man's playground, too, on which he not only took up the gage of challenge it threw down, but invented challenges and adventures of his own, 'going and growing' in experience as he went.

But beyond this he must sound its depths; first for his food; then for the pearl and the sponge; then for his whale-oil to give light and lubrication; for the sheer love of knowledge, too, though incidentally that knowledge was a chief element in the seaman's safety as he charted the sea's floor until it was often better mapped than the surface of the land. Then he must speculate upon the possible navigation of the depths. Into them the pearl diver had gone for a brief moment. His armored successor, engaged in the work of salvage or construction, had greatly surpassed him. But as to sinking one's craft out of sight or sound and hoping to return to safety and efficiency upon the surface — that proved too great a strain upon the average man's credulity. A thousand questions thronged to the skeptical mind too hard for the believer to answer. But the challenge held its place. Through changes brought about in the fabrication of structural steel, in the substitution of the internal combustion engine for steam, and in the adaptation of electricity to a multitude of auxiliary uses, these questions were answered; until at last the submarine ship became an accomplished and practical fact. It crossed the ocean upon or beneath the surface; — and it sank the *Lusitania.*

The marvel of scientific achievement threatens to blunt our sense of wonder. I remembered the two magicians of my boyhood who in the Arabian Nights were accustomed, being brothers, once or twice a year to look into a magic casket and discover thereby each the other's location and welfare. It seemed so beyond the realm of possibility that

even a boy could pass the story by with a smile. Yet there was no marvel in it intrinsically greater than that whereby two widely sundered kinsmen might to-day tune their instruments to a proper harmony of ethereal wave-length and converse across a thousand miles of unbridged space.

Then, too, there were the realms of the immensely vast and the extraordinarily little into which men have delved with such amazing additions to their knowledge and power. The astronomer turns his telescope upon a mighty star like Antares, and the magnifying lenses so far from bringing it nearer only reduce it more evidently to a point of light. But the astronomer has other weapons wherewith to maintain his acceptance of a great star's challenge. He may calculate its parallax and use the chord as a base-line for vaster calculations. He may submit its light to the spectroscope and determine, not only the star's composition, but whether it be approaching or receding. More than all this he estimates its distance; not, to be sure, in terms that the mind can readily grasp, for it is a matter of 'light-years'; but he learns that the light which reveals Antares to the eye to-night left that star sometime in the sixteenth century and has been travelling with a velocity sufficient to girdle the earth eight times in a second through all the intervening four hundred years. One might fancy this watcher of the skies stopping in the midst of his endeavor, smitten with the vastness of the universe and the contrasted littleness of himself, his tiny planet, and his hold on time. 'What is man?' he asks. 'A reed shaken in the

wind?' 'Yes, a reed,' echoes Pascal's immortal answer, 'but a *thinking* reed.'

So long as man can thus face the world that frames his life, putting questions to it, gaining answers from it, and using the products of this process in creative endeavors of his own, he is mastering fate in a very real sense. In the sphere of the material he is making undeniable progress. Not only is the mass of his knowledge steadily growing; he is becoming increasingly competent and ready in translating mere abstract knowledge into terms of applied and practical wisdom; until, to-day, only the most foolish and short-sighted of Gradgrinds dare condemn the worth of pure science. An experiment which day before yesterday simply showed the difference in the impact of a breeze upon the opposite sides of a revolving cylinder, and which yesterday was practically forgotten, is revived to-day, finds application in the rotorship and may conceivably introduce a new element into navigation.

Here, in such realms as these, is progress, evident, acknowledged, and apparently increasing with accelerated pace. The world is a better place to live in so far as the tools, the accessories, and the conveniences of living go. In respect of protection against disease and control of means of subsistence, we have got on.

But there is another world. The Fourth Gospel quotes Jesus as saying, 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me,' and Wordsworth echoes a related thought in singing

> 'The world is too much with us; late and soon
> Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.'

What do we mean by 'the world' in this sense? Human society as it organizes itself apart from God, says Dean Inge; and that is true. Yet the phrase is really more inclusive, because it comprehends as a chief element the individuals that make up human society, refusing any true organization, but pursuing each his own way of greed, ambition, lust, or hate without other reference to his fellows than to make them agents or tools. Here the unloveliness of life appears and those contradictions of man's nobility that urge the onlooker toward skepticism. It is inevitable that the man of generous impulse, surveying the story of mankind, should have a good many bad half-hours; and that some of the worst should come as he ponders the latest chapters. The eras of savagery and barbarism with their crudeness and cruelty; their founding of family life upon brutal capture of a female mate or upon her purchase as though she were a domestic animal; their superstitious fears and magic rites; their blood lust and acceptance of man's war against his fellow as the norm of life — all this can be borne with, partly because it is the story of a far-off day and partly because we think we can discern rifts in its clouds through which a more genial light shines. 'To-morrow will be better,' we say; and in many ways to-morrow is better; at least upon the surface. Though still organized apart from the God revealed by Jesus, a higher organization appears. Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome represent a certain access of law and order which assured the man of ancient days a measure of protection from the

unregulated whims or passion of his fellows and even from the tyranny of his rulers. Yet, looked at from one angle the old feeling of hopelessness recurs. What did the world care when the throngs of captives depicted on Assyrian monuments had their eyeballs pierced or were impaled? When the multitudes of workmen who built the Pyramids died under stress of their forced labor or by the accidents that must have accompanied it? And later still when Greek and Roman had not only made conquest of their world by force of arms, but had introduced some elements of real culture into living, still how crude and even base seems the lot of the majority of plain people. We celebrate the Greek love of beauty, the freedom of Greek life, the genius that could produce the Parthenon, the Winged Victory, the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles; and then we look beneath the surface and, behold, all this society was built upon slavery, the masses of men lived in a poverty that must have involved squalor, family life was poor in those finer traits of domesticity that make home so sacred a term to many of us, the decencies and safeguards of sanitation were but little understood and less regarded. The teacher of youth might be and often was a slave, technically liable to scourging at the whim of a master, while the female slave had no claim to her own person as against the advances of her owner. Then, too, in the sphere of public life it was not difficult for a Cleon to win popular support or for an Aristides to find himself thrust into exile, while, so far from showing a general tolerance toward liberty

of thought and speech, the very moderate heresies of Socrates involved his draught of hemlock.

How much of this fundamental social wrong was felt by Greek or Roman it is hard to say, though something of it may have helped to point the pen of Juvenal and deepen the skepticism of Lucretius. But in a day earlier than theirs it had brought specific utterance to the lips of the great Hebrew prophets; and the recognition of it underruns many of the most significant words of Jesus, giving, indeed, a quite distinctive complexion to the Gospel of Saint Luke. The organized Church took account of the existence of the downtrodden, as a fact which challenged attention and service; but it was slow to appraise the conditions that lay behind the fact. This was not always because of sloth, indifference, or fear, though selfishness and a zeal for power that reflected the ambitions of the outer world has too often marked the Church. It has sometimes come from an inadequate idea of the Kingdom of God as though it were to be inhabited by men plucked here and there like brands from the world's burning; sometimes from the closely related feeling that the Lord of this world were really Satan rather than God and that the world as an organization was his in such a sense as not to be regarded as an object of redemption. The monastery or convent by its very existence testified to a faith that was real enough, but that, so far from looking toward conquest, sought safety rather in flight. Yet even here there was a constructive side, and the honest critic will remember not only the faults of the mediæval

Church in a time of cruelty and disorder which it did so little to overcome, but its service in keeping alive some semblance of learning and the arts, and in mitigating, by its Truce of God and other pacific measures, the turbulence of petty rulers who were as wild and ignorant as they were cruel and grasping. The real business of travelling man is, of course, to keep the sea and steer toward new lands of adventure and achievement; but there come times when he must seek a harbor until some present calamity be past; and it is the part of wisdom not to despise the harbor or to condemn it because it is not a favoring tide. In certain periods of history and in some chapters of innumerable human lives, the Church has offered a refuge. Of course some have sought it who ought to have foregone safety and challenged the outer danger instead; and far too often the Church has overemphasized this side of its mission until it has seemed to be rather a negative than a positive element in the world's life.

But there has never been wanting for long a haunting voice breaking out of it to set forth the plight of this world of which we are speaking — this union of selfishness, lust, and pride trying to organize a life apart from God; yes, and succeeding sometimes so far as the outward semblance of prosperity and permanence would indicate. The subject is too large for adequate illustration; but instances throng the mind. Here, for example, is the purveyor of drugs or of arms who would debauch a nation if he might for the lining of his pocket; here is the procurer to his fellow's lust or greed willing to wreck a

woman's virtue or a poor man's means of livelihood in the process; here, very much in evidence, indeed, is the man who exploits his neighbors for his own material gain, whether he be a conscienceless employer of labor or the member of an equally conscienceless labor union. And, on the other hand, here is the realm of pleasure or fashion with its hectic inanity and its urgent reversal of life's deeper values — the world in which one ceases to ask, 'What shall I do to be saved?' and inquires instead, How ought I to eat asparagus? What is the current 'wrinkle' — if a wrinkle be permitted — in evening dress? Is my automobile up to date and are my jewels (or their paste equivalents) in the latest setting? It is a world in which the old question, 'What is truth?' fades into insignificance before the more urgent query, What are trumps?[1]

Is there hope for such a world as this? Can any good issue from its selfishness and its silliness? As one reads the 'society' columns in our metropolitan journals and their vapid echoes in the provinces or glances over the illustrations in 'The Sketch,' 'Vogue,' or 'Vanity Fair' on the table of a country club, a mood of despair is likely to be induced. The question forces itself upon the mind whether the silly selfishness is not more hopeless than the greedy selfishness. The exploitation of others in industry, bad as it is, has at least sometimes a constructive side. 'A soul of goodness in things evil' appears even in such an industry as the manufacture of

[1] The reader will remember Mr. Birrell's use of this last contrast in quite another way when comparing Lamb and Coleridge.

arms which has played so great a part in the development and standardization of machine tools in America and Britain and in the consequent multiplication of the means of better livelihood. But what hope could the onlooker cherish for a generation whose ideals should be those of the race-course and the cabaret; of the voluptuous picture-play and the extravagance of Palm Beach in February?

Little, indeed, if this world organizing itself apart from God, with coöperative guilt and limited liability, were the only world of which we have experience. Happily it is not. There is another realm where men and women live, labor, gain, lose, love, and sometimes hate — a world of thronging imperfections and of conspicuous virtues, where injustice appears and is challenged by man's sense of right, where frivolity seems sometimes regnant but is always being sobered by contact with fundamental reality, where masses of men seized by a sort of mob-dementia will occasionally outrage the wisdom of the generations only to add a chapter to it at last as they find themselves again. It is here that the battle of the ages is to be won if ever won at all. It is over this field that men are always peering and making anxious inquiry whether progress toward victory is to be discerned. No question can be raised as to man's struggle with his material environment. There he indisputably gets on by leaps and bounds. 'Progress' in the world of mere pleasure, display, and vanity, on the other hand, is scarcely a significant word. The means of self-indulgence become more varied and they certainly grow more expen-

sive. But this world is one with Nineveh and Tyre and it must go their way. The men and women whose lives are lived in it and whose ambitions are bounded by it scarcely count in the general sum of life's forces. They come up in a night, flourish exceedingly for a little, and wither as quickly at the touch of the east wind of adversity.

Let us turn to the more significant field of man's endeavor to organize his industrial, political, intellectual, and moral experience upon a basis where life shall really be worth living. The Old World even in the days before the War was wont to claim that the New World was scarcely in a position to pass judgment upon the possibility of progress here because it had such room for material development that man's busy mind was diverted from the deeper problems involved. He was so pleased with his apparent successes in the near region of mill, shop, laboratory, farm, or railway and, like a big Jack Horner, smiled so pleasantly, half at himself, thinking how competent he was, half at his world, feeling how successfully he was pulling plums from it, that he took no notice of a darkening horizon and sinister forms gathering there, threatening, if not his own day, at least the to-morrow of his children. There was a half-truth in this accusation of our Western incompetence to appraise the problems of the world. From the nineties of last century, for instance, it would be easy to assemble testimony to a fond optimism that prophesied an end of war attended by a sort of good-natured brotherhood of nations, whose material needs American industry should supply

with greatly enhanced prestige and at a thumping profit. One cannot claim that this dream has altogether faded; but a feeling of boding uneasiness has crept into it and there have been episodes of unquestionable nightmare. We have been brought wonderfully close to the Old World. Something of its pessimism, now brooding and introspective, now violent and revolutionary, has touched us. Sometimes our 'reaction' to all this is amusing in its naïveté. Our younger literary critics 'see red' as they contemplate, for instance, the horrid 'respectability' of Longfellow's life. How could a man who neither praised adultery in his verse nor committed it himself, who must even be granted an honest prejudice against it — how could such a man write poetry? Nor can Mr. Sinclair Lewis conceive it possible apparently that plain folk in Gopher Prairie or in Zenith should be other than loathly. If they aim at respectability, then be sure of their narrowness, meanness, and skill in backbiting. If they seem to find any comfort in what they may call the things of the Spirit, that damning fact at once brands them with hypocrisy. If they talk too much of automobiles, as they generally do, it is proof positive that their natures are responsive to little that is higher. And if in some moment when deeper experience is thrust upon them they are convicted of what they think to be sin, if they repent, if temporal or spiritual calamity impend, or if they go down to the gates of death, even here their creator's eye would appear to follow them contemptuously and his mood deny them the human appeal and sim-

ple dignity that some of us who have known them in such moments think we have seen displayed.

Meanwhile the pornographic fiction-mongers, some of them rude but powerful prophets of 'realism,' and others 'artists' in the sense that almost compels the inclusion of that word in quotation marks so touched is their work with a sort of preciosity, rear their phallic altars where multitudes worship — always, be it noted, from the highest artistic motives.

There is a good deal of pose in all this. The earnest young Americans (young by courtesy at least) who, after delivering their souls of a testimony against their native land in a volume of essays, sailed not long ago for a Europe where they hope to find greater freedom and a truer culture, cause a smile which promises to broaden into laughter as they come straggling back. But the fact remains that America like Europe is facing some new realities of experience and getting rid of some illusions. There is boasting still, but the style of it is less 'spread-eagle' than of yore.

What now does this soberer view reveal? For one thing that man lives in the midst of a process, which, measured by any ordinary standard, material or moral, we ought to call a process of improvement. It is the fashion in some quarters to speak of the man who receives wages under the present industrial system as a 'wage-slave.' The phrase has value as a question-begging epithet implying that no advance has been made by the workers of the world since the days of slavery. If one pro-

tests that this is an unfair interpretation of social history, he will be asked to consider the immigrant toiling against time in the sweat-shop. The demand is a fair one. This sweat-shop toiler ought to be kept in mind just so long as sweat-shop conditions continue to exist. But his existence can be fairly used as an argument in the present discussion only when due account is taken of the efforts made both by the labor union and by an increasingly enlightened public to abolish the sweat-shop. If the sweat-shop wage-slave is to be fairly used upon one side of the argument to prove that no real social and industrial amelioration has been won, then on the other might be cited the experience of an English visitor who was taken not long since to look at some construction work upon the athletic field in a university town. From his place of vantage on the 'stadium' he saw a large assemblage of automobiles parked near by as though an athletic contest were on and spectators must have thronged to watch it. His wonder framed a question; and grew, as he was told that these were the cars of the workmen on the building he had come to see. The sweat-shop toiler shows how much remains to be done. The parked automobiles outside ten thousand places where manual labor is performed suggest how much has been accomplished in some quarters and along some lines. Neither side of the case is really established by either line of evidence.

But when we ask the wielder of the 'wage-slave' argument if he, provided he were a worker, as quite probably he is not, would consent to change places

with the best advantaged of old-time slave or serf craftsmen, his answer if it be honest can be only in the negative. There is a difference between the condition of the agricultural laborer depicted by Sir Frederick Eden in his description of the lot of the poor in 1797 and that of the same man to-day, whether in England or America, that suggests contrast. One may approach the two from any side one chooses and question them as to wages, hours of labor, living conditions, opportunities to educate their children, facilities for amusement or for travel from place to place, freedom to express their opinions by voice or vote, provision for their care in case of accident or serious illness, and the answer in the vast majority of cases will indicate marked material improvement, though it may not indicate that anything approaching ideal conditions has arrived; for the agricultural laborer is one of the last to win his share of material gain.

Or take the much-argued case of 'prohibition.' Personally, I had always opposed the notion of introducing sumptuary regulations into organic law. What one ate, drank, wore, or paid for commodities, should be left just so far as possible to individual taste. Questions of personal conduct, too, even when the problem of right or wrong is involved, should remain within the individual's choice just so far as possible. But that recurrent proviso gave one pause. In looking back over a long experience in several urban and rural communities that brought me into intimate personal and professional relations with many diversely situated families, I was struck

with the physical, economic, and social ravages that the habitual use of alcohol had wrought. Setting aside for the moment so-called ethical considerations, it seemed to me that I had seen three outstanding physical enemies at work among the ranks in which my service had been rendered. They were tuberculosis, venereal disease, and the drink habit. Of the three, the third had this peculiarity, that it not only evidently incapacitated more victims than either of its companions, but it was their chief ally. Alcohol in a multitude of cases lowered the threshold of resistance to the tubercular assault just as time and time again it weakened self-control and incited passion in the interest of venereal infection.

But this is not all; nor is it of the sot or the habitual drunkard alone that we are speaking. As I came to review the past, the very large number of those who were scotched but not killed by alcohol impressed itself upon me. Here were a large group of men ranging from college graduates to manual laborers whose efficiency was compromised, whose lives were shortened, and whose significance to the world was markedly diminished. At the risk of seeming repetitious, I emphasize the fact that these were not men of dubious character or of inferior general competence. They were often genial socially; very often, if they were laborers or artisans, they belonged to the industrious and efficient section of their order; if they were educated men, they were as frequently above as below the average in point of ability. But this characteristic was common to them all: that they could not maintain the

places which belonged to them because of their occasional lapses into drunkenness. The physician lost his patients, the lawyer his clients, the accountant his desk. The youth of talent and promise was rusticated for life at the expense of his family; the craftsman of ability must needs support himself by odd jobs of tinkering and mending. The laborer's work was perhaps least interrupted because in a sense it was measured by the day and in good times could be resumed, if not in one place, then in another; but he was generally condemned by his habits to continued poverty, and it was he above all who was likely to find a life of usefulness swiftly ended by exposure or disease consequent upon a debauch. The habit, even when mildly and occasionally tyrannous, was a drug habit, of the nature of a disease, and to be fought as tuberculosis and syphilis are fought, by a careful segregation of the poison, by every device of prophylactic treatment, by an appeal to the instinct of self-preservation and self-control, and by advancing the added ethical claim involved in one's duty to one's family and to society at large.

Of course there were those who treated the whole matter as confined within the range of taste and morals; and who were merely contemptuous or condemnatory of their erring brethren. It is commonly supposed that these were the Pharisaic 'unco' guid.' My own experience is that lack of charity is often most pronounced among another class who, perhaps, flout religion altogether, but who may happen to feel strong where the neighbor is weak.

Such folk long made up the band of militant 'Prohibitionists' who strove to outdo the intemperance of the drunkard with an intemperance of language that half-amused, half-shocked, and quite alienated many who should have been their best allies. Bludgeoning people with beatitudes simply will not do. But the masses of plain folk were seeing with their eyes and hearing with their ears. Awkward, blundering, and sometimes half-brutal though mass movements are likely to be, they reached some realization of the fact that the thing to be dealt with here was a disease which threatened the individual with disability, suffering, and death, and inflicted poverty, crime, and stupendous economic loss upon the body politic.

The drastic law which followed was not primarily a piece of sumptuary legislation. It was primarily quarantine legislation, and as such only can it be quite justified. In increasing measure the people are coming to regard alcohol as a habit-forming drug that is peculiarly destructive of the integrity of individual and social life. As such they propose to regulate its manufacture, importation, and use. The conflict with individual and social habit is incidental even though at present painfully real. But the fact remains, and it is becoming clear, not only to the masses of American citizens, but to increasing numbers abroad, that the State which succeeds in this endeavor will have gained an inestimable advantage in the competition for place, wealth, and power. So, from an attitude of hostility to such legislation which lasted nearly up to the

time of the Eighteenth Amendment's adoption, I for one have come to recognize in it a law of social and economic necessity, crude, to be sure, and with regrettable features in its administration and incidence, but marking on the whole a step toward making the world a better frame in which to display the picture of human life; and further still, what has fallen under my eyes in a part of the country where enforcement of the law is most difficult and smuggling most frequent, confirms my opinion that even with these exceptions the general movement of the people's will is toward a conquest of this particular habit and the elimination of this singularly subtile, obstinate, and mischievous disease.

Whenever one advances such claims as these in behalf of material and ethical progress, he is sure to be met by the contradiction involved in the late War — a contradiction thought by many to be so complete as to put progress to shame and to endanger civilization itself. Mention has before been made of the extravagant claims once put forward in the name of the science and general enlightenment which were soon to usher in a golden age. They were pitifully unsubstantial, but no more so, perhaps, than the more recent pessimistic laments upon the other side. Our whole view of this question is often vitiated by a mistaken picture or figure of progress itself. Some crudely think of it as a general ascent, slow or rapid, up a sort of inclined plane. Others, with more comprehensive understanding of life and history, prefer the figure of the spiral. Neither figure is adequate; indeed, both may prove positively

misleading. If a figure must be used, I should prefer the one suggested on a previous page of a ship upon its voyage under sail; now with an entirely favoring wind and current; again with wind against and current for it when progress can only be made by beating to windward, advancing, be it noted, mainly by means of the very force that seems to retard it, and in rough water because wind and current are opposed each to other; but advancing none the less because that mysterious something that makes up the trend of the times is in its favor; again finding both wind and tide in opposition when it must beat to and fro, just holding on or perhaps losing ground; worse yet, forced to lie to under some rag of sail and drift to leeward; possibly compelled for the time being to scud out of its course before some blast of destiny through leagues of sea that must be toilsomely recovered in better weather. Through such vicissitude do ships complete their voyages and make harbor, because on board them are men gifted with power to read the stars, to keep a port steadily in view, and to steer a course. Human progress is like that; rapid for a little now and then; slow and toilsome often when wind and tide must be played against each other; with its times of waiting and drifting when patience is the chief virtue; and again knowing its chapters of defeat and threatened catastrophe when hope dies in all but the stoutest hearts; but gaining ground upon the whole because some men can read the stars and see across stormy waters a port worth reaching and steer a course thereto.

Man is still undefeated; it is at least a fair hypothesis that he is indomitable. An eminent historical scholar has in a recent address formulated six tendencies or trends in history which he thinks to be worthy of the name of laws. They are: first, a law of continuity which links the present to the past and will evolve the future from the present; second, a law of the impermanence of nations, keeping society from hardening into immutable social or governmental forms; third, a law of the unity of the race — that is, of interdependence among all its members; fourth, a law of democracy assuring ultimate power, though the Soviet rage and the Fascisti imagine vain things, to the masses of the people; fifth, a law of freedom — a freedom which is increasingly sought and must be ultimately won by all peoples; and sixth, a law of moral progress, whereby the thing that is clearly ascertained to be right has increased and increasing weight in the councils of the nations.[1]

To-day one of the chief problems to be solved before the wounds of yesterday can be healed and the march of progress confidently resumed is the problem of war, and the world's insurance against its recurrence. Some men are joyously and some sorrowfully skeptical. Some very militant pacifists find delight in discussing the problem apparently because of the opportunity to call hard names and broadcast curses; there being always a type of reformer bent on blessing his fellows whether they

[1] Professor E. P. Cheyney, Presidential Address before the American Historical Association at Columbus, Ohio, December 27, 1923. *American Historical Review*, January, 1924.

will or no, but enjoying his blessing best when it can be delivered *sub specie damnationis*. Not much advance will be made by branding soldiers as murderers, banding students together by an oath never to bear arms, and fulminating against the churches because they did not prevent war in 1914. The real solution will remain with quieter voices, with more studious and reasonable minds, and the hope of the future is built upon the fact that at last men are making a scientific study of the facts involved and the goal to be attained, and that this enterprise is inspired by an intelligent, informed, and resolute good-will. Given these things, backed as they are by the efforts of organized labor on the one hand and statesmen of principle and vision on the other, and all the past must be contradicted if light be not thrown on the problem and progress eventually made toward its solution. So with our thronging questions, industrial, political, social, and ethical. By degrees we solve them, or at least come to some reasonable *modus vivendi* with them. The solutions do not bring us perfect peace, of course, because as we rise in the scale of living the horizon of the unknown becomes enlarged; indeed, it increases, not merely directly with the growth of our radius of vision, but as its square, and the challenge of things to be done grows proportionally. But one man's adventure with life tends to assure him that we have the right to face this enlarged field of experience without fear and in high assurance of a more competent dealing with it than the past has seen. This may seem to be but a mild and tempered

faith. In fact, it reaches high because it is based on man's creative instinct, indomitable will, and abiding sense of right and wrong — the thing called, by Religion, the Image of God.

CHAPTER XVIII

DEATH — AND THEN?

'There is not room for Death
Nor atom that his might can render void,'

wrote Emily Brontë; and Death, as though piqued at the challenge, emptied and swept the rooms occupied by her and her two marvellous sisters before the eldest had reached forty. Which is a parable. From the beginning of such records as open windows into man's thought, he has accepted Death with one hand and defied him with the other. Nor is either gesture quite a vain one. Death is a fact of experience as much as night and sleep after day and weariness. It threatens man's undertakings with defeat; but it brings peace to his unrest. The coward will flee it only to be certainly overtaken; the brave will meet it calmly, but with an inevitable urge to defy it in its very hour of conquest. 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' is a cry older than Saint Paul, though its earlier utterances lack his clear note of hope. Man is like the lower animals in keeping watch and ward against Death's attack; he surpasses them in devices for detecting the enemy's stealthier approaches and in thwarting his stratagems; and he is unique in refusing to accept his inevitable defeat as final.

Whence comes this urge or impulse? From the idea of the soul as an entity possessing powers not entirely dependent on the body. Whether this

originated from the sight of man's breath made visible on a damp or frosty morning, from the shadow dogging him in sunshine or moonlight and refusing to be shaken off, from the 'something' that seemed to be here now and to be here no longer when the last sobbing gasp ended or the beat of a battle-wound's arterial jet ceased, or from his own journeys and meeting in dreams with other men living or dead, the fact remains that from earliest times vast multitudes have absolutely declined to believe that a dead man was done. The thing that made him *him* had a further experience before it. There might not be any Resurrection and Life in the future; yet there was something left; generally, to be sure, not very cheerful or even hopeful, but at least another chapter of adventure. The light was not quite out and it might burn with brighter flame.

I felt a trace of disappointment, perhaps, on first discovering how small a place this expectation of a future life held among the Hebrews who wrote and read the Old Testament and from whom so much that seemed fundamental in the Christian faith was derived; but further knowledge put this fact in better perspective. Here was a people whose sense of the individual was sunk in the sense of the nation. The part was lost in the whole. The man died; Israel went on. But a time came when their experience of life refused to accept this doctrine as sufficient. It did not quite account for the change and chance of man's contest with his world. A group of great religious leaders, greater than the isolated statesmen and seers who had gone before, arose who

felt the stirring of a larger faith. The overthrow of Jerusalem threatened to end the nation; yet the devout Hebrew lived on. Ezekiel set forth in rude but vivid terms the responsibility of the individual for the performance of his own part in life and for the salvation of his own soul. A man was no longer to be lumped with his family or to be redeemed or lost with the nation. The piety of his father could not save him; nor should the misdoing of his son necessarily condemn him.

The author of Job took up the problem from another angle. He felt the mystery of life's contradictions. The old notion that the good man prospered and the bad man suffered each in general proportion to his desert simply would not do. He stated the problem of a good man in his prosperity smitten, plagued, undone by the repeated blows of a fate too malicious to be blind. This man's friends tell him that the woe is allotted in recompense for sin, which, if it were not evident, must be secret, and, if not committed in deed, must have been latent in desire or implied in arrogance. But the haggard Job knew better. The problem was greater than that. The Adventure of Life was too large to be expressed by the equation that these men suggested. There were too many unknown quantities in it and variables beyond their comprehension. The drama ends in mystery; but not, therefore, necessarily in contradiction. True, the man who once thought that he had a sufficient measure for life is left with his hand upon his mouth before its indefinable wonder; a hand which he removes only

to pray for his friends who had been at once so much shallower and more arrogant than he that they have been put to worse confusion; but he remains, for all that, master of the situation. One feels that it makes little difference whether camels, she-asses, and children were opulently vouchsafed him again; one almost wishes that they had not been; so little needed were they for the climax of the story. That culminates in the portrait of a man who has become Captain of his Soul, not in the swashbuckler Henley fashion, but through deep experience of poverty and riches, sickness and health, life and death, amid which he stands as lord of circumstance. The years of his life cannot measure him and the day of his death will not end him.

In quite another way the lesson came home to a generation not very far removed from that of the author of Job. When, after Alexander's conquests in what we call the Near East, his successors attempted to break down Hebrew convictions and align their faith with pagan cults, bitter persecution fell upon the faithful. Martyrdom was forced upon believers and believers did not fail. Here was something that transcended a family, a tribal, or even a national faith; or, perhaps, it were truer to say that here appeared a corporate faith coming to flower and fruit in the complete devotion of individual lives. As men watched their fellows gallantly facing fire and sword, an inevitable conclusion was thrust upon them, that, in Virgilian phrase, so great an adventure could not be in vain — that the soul which could so transcend all that earthly circum-

stance might array against it must outlast earthly circumstance itself. This, it seemed to me, was something far more than mere superstition; it was a natural development or evolution of experience fit to be taken into account in a day committed as mine was to the doctrine of development.

Then came the amazing spiritual era of Jesus and his disciples. These appeared to be plain and humble men set in a society whose leaders were much exercised about the keeping of a formal law and a more formal tradition; divided into two camps, also, over the question of life after death. The Pharisees, who, despite their formalism and frequent hypocrisy, represented the more spiritual party, made a future life a part of their creed. They had at least a theoretical faith in resurrection. The Sadducees denied it, partly, perhaps, through the natural doubt that always broods over this region and even more because theirs was preëminently the 'worldly' party which sought its ultimate good in this life and on the fields of politics, commerce, and international relationship. So essentially mundane were they, so enwrapped with the things of time, that eternity seemed to be, as often to such people, a vain and empty term.

Jesus did not make overmuch of this doctrine. Indeed, so far as teaching went, it would seem as though he wished his own to be implicit rather than explicit. When he dealt with affairs beyond the grave, he used the current phrases about 'Abraham's bosom'; and when he was heckled by the Sadducees with their question about the wife of the

seven brethren, he swept the pettiness of their contention aside with a grand gesture which pointed out how far they were from any spiritual conception of the future life. If the problem were ever to be solved, it certainly was not to be upon that plane.

Then came his death by violence, and by a sort of violence that threatened through its disgrace to seal his tomb with a more powerful spell than Pilate's official signet could work. And out of this experience of evident obloquy and apparent extinction he came again in power. How? men have always been asking. Was the body that Mary and the disciples saw the identical flesh and blood that hung upon the Cross? Was the mysterious Presence in the Upper Room and by the shore of Galilee physically the same as that which sat at Levi's feast and was bound to the pillar of scourging? Much breath and ink have been spent in answering such questions. Men have claimed that their hope of immortal life hinged on a positive reply; that, except they knew that Jesus came again with the identical flesh that suffered on the Cross and was laid in Joseph's tomb, faith was vain.

I do not think so. The faith in a future life which shall be personal and of worth to the individual man here and hereafter has a broader and more spiritual foundation than that. It is, moreover, of a different sort from that. As has been pointed out before, one of the high values attaching to the Fourth Gospel and one of the chief reasons why it is cherished by Christians is that it universalizes the teaching of Jesus, puts it upon a broad spiritual foundation, and

gives to it a true spiritual application. It makes Jesus say, in effect, 'You must not base your faith upon any mere episode in my earthly career or strive to dogmatize from any isolated experience of mine. No, you must not even in some future century strive to copy my living in the first. You will naturally attempt something of this sort while I am with you in the flesh and so far forth you will get a religion merely of one age, of one place, of one physical complexion. It is expedient that I go away; for, except I go, you will never know at first hand the presence and power of the Spirit. You will be trying to march forward while looking backward. Your watchword will sometimes mistakenly be "Back to Christ" when it should be "On with the Spirit." I would not have you for a moment forget me or contemn the Past, though you will be tempted to do both. But I would have you remember that my example is not so much for your duplication as it is an illustration of what the infinite Love of God once did when translated into human speech; and an inspiration to apply this same love to future problems as the Spirit may point out ways and means.'

So Jesus spoke and went his way. Yet it was not as a dead but as a living Master that the early Church thought of him. He lived and they should live. Faith in him was no mere fond harking-back to the grace of a day that was gone, but a confident trust in a Lord and Giver of Life; and in this faith they set forth to win their world.

In short, faith in life after death, or, more exactly, in a life wherein death should become merely an

eminent incident or episode, was not meant to be essentially a dogma — a thing taught in the *ipse dixit* of a master and to be rejected on peril of banishment from Christianity's pale. This faith seemed to me to be an adventure, the acceptance of an hypothesis that fitted life and agreed with the genius of religion. It took account — true account — of the value of that mysterious but intimate something which we call personality.[1] It helped to feed the hunger of the human heart on bread really convenient for it. It gave, too, an adequate value to time. And beyond this it supplied a rational basis for that ineradicable tendency of man to defy Death's threat to write 'Finis' when the last entry in his diary is made.

The genuinely and tolerantly rational thinker will always give respectful consideration to persistent tendencies of human thought. Beliefs that endure through centuries of life's contradiction, aided and abetted by man's occasional derision and persecution, have substance in them. These are often crude and unorganized in form and struggle into such irrational or grotesque expression as to repel rather than attract; still, if they persist, appearing in some form *semper et ubique*, they not only have meaning for the history of human thought, they have claim to a place in the conduct of life.

[1] Few words have been worse abused than this of late and it is in such danger of becoming a mere cant term that one hesitates to use it. One hears with a frequency that has grown really painful such phrases as 'He is an engaging personality' where the abstract noun is not only needless but is positively misused. It is a fair illustration of the shallowness and callowness of much modern 'culture.'

Now it seemed to me that belief in life after death belonged here. It would be too much to claim universality for it. We have already seen how small a part it played in the faith of the Old Testament. Yet even here it was not quite non-existent. Superstition found place for it if intelligent religion did not, as the ghost of Samuel affrighting Saul bore witness. Egypt meanwhile had reared monuments to it that were destined to fill our own day with wonder. A little later, Greeks of the calibre of Socrates and Plato were to argue for it. The argument of the 'Phædo' is not, to be sure, very convincing in itself; but the significant fact is that these men did not believe because they argued; they argued because they believed. The faith may have been faulty in form and irrational in expression; but consciously or subconsciously it was there — a haunting somewhat in the background of thinking and believing; an integral part of their life and bound to find record in their history.

Then came the vast influx of eastern mystery cults. Many were rude, some were grotesque, but despite all Sadducean influences — and these are to be neither denied nor overlooked — they found an answer to their appeal in multitudes of Greek and Roman hearts. Through the dimness of the so-called Middle Age the light burned on, too often luridly, I admitted, and sometimes in a fashion closer akin to superstition than to faith; but it endured, and with the Reformation took on new forms and powers. Indeed, now it threatened so to thrust itself into the centre of the field of faith as to rule

with a sort of tyranny over other appeals to the religious instinct and to render religion other-worldly. The terrors of Hell and the bliss of Heaven seemed to be in danger of monopolizing religious thought in such measure as to dim the vision of the common task and the world's need of bread, service, and brotherly kindness. To be sure this danger has been overworked by preachers of a certain sort and particularly by 'literary persons.' The Evangelical, whether Calvinist, Lutheran, or Arminian, has in point of fact been among the keenest-eyed to see the world's wrongs and the most zealous to spend and be spent in righting them. Fanatical he may sometimes have been; but generally clear-headed and often warmer-hearted, as well as more humane, than his critics when in touch with actual need. The history of the struggle for civil and religious freedom; for the overthrow of the slave-trade and finally of slavery itself; for the limitation of the hours of labor in mine and mill; for the amelioration of the criminal law and the better administration of prisons; for more humane treatment of the insane; for better educational advantages and their availability to greater numbers; — all these as well as a multitude more of the world's higher enterprises have depended for their inception or their later impulse largely upon men of 'evangelical' temper; that is, upon men who felt a concern for their own spiritual welfare, for the welfare of others, and who saw in their fellow men 'souls for whom Christ died.' The world may scoff at that phrase; it cannot deny the power wrapt up in it. The seventh Earl of Shaftes-

bury, to whom so frequent reference has been made, had his pet watchwords which if repeated to-day would sound like cant; and his evident limitations of sympathy as well as of temper; but, to adapt the dying Latimer's great phrase, he lighted a candle in the social and industrial life of England, which, by God's grace, has never been put out. John Calvin is not exactly an appealing figure, though none but the utterly obtuse can fail to admire his transcendent intellectual power; yet, even if one should admit the indictment of his enemies, Catholic and Protestant alike, Geneva under his rule would still bear excellent comparison in respect of health and sanitation, education and general intelligence, the care of the poor and sick, industry, trade and civic freedom with Avignon of the Popes.[1]

These men generally undertook their tasks for themselves and others in that faith 'in personal immortality which gives value to time.' Many of them probably based their faith upon the word of Scripture. This they would have assigned as their authority had the faith been called in question. But to imply that they did their service to the world with a view to gaining Heaven as a *quid pro quo* would be to do them sad injustice. Indeed, that line of endeavor has always been closed to the Evangelical by the very terms of his faith. Heaven was not to be won. It was of God's grace, not of man's desert, that its doors were opened to believers. No, these good works were wrought because the business of

[1] Article 'The Reformers and the Social Gospel,' *Federal Council Bulletin*. November–December, 1924.

helping the world and one's brother in it agreed with the genius of the Christian life. It accorded with an adventure necessarily expressed in terms of time when men spoke of it to one another here, but visible to God in terms whose 'yesterday' and 'to-day' were swallowed up in 'forever.' It was inevitable under such conditions that Christian thought about life after death should pass through certain pendulum-like changes, now swinging toward a strong emphasis upon Heaven and Hell that has given to literature treasures of price like the 'Divina Commedia,' 'Paradise Lost,' and the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and to dogmatic theology some of its least lovely and least convincing articles; now trending away from all reference to things of another life than this, arguing like Whittier's Abraham Davenport that God will do His business if we tend to ours. But after one swing the other. There is no use in trying to make people entirely 'other-worldly.' They will not continue in that stay. There is just as little use in trying to express them and their problems in terms of threescore and ten years. A decade may seem to succeed in that endeavor; a century will reverse the judgment.

I observed that the tendency of the early years of the half-century which included my own memories had been to discount in many ways what men called 'eternal life.' That was the heyday of physical science; of the theory of development; of the philosophy of Huxley and of Herbert Spencer — often carried by the man in the street to conclusions that its authors would scarce have owned. The *cachet* of

a 'man of science' seemed to be to dismiss all concern with a life beyond the present, sometimes dogmatically as Clifford might have done, and more often with a sort of patronizing contempt as though these things could matter only to the credulous and sentimental. A professor in an American college sent a questionary — I suppose he called it a 'questionnaire' — to as many 'scientific men' as he could reach, and, having found a certain number of them long-suffering enough to answer it, announced his conclusions concerning the relatively small fraction that believed in 'immortality.' No one would care to deny the truth of Dr. Leuba's figures — as figures. But one may well question whether, in the first place, such an investigation can be made either broad or deep enough to furnish really significant conclusions; and, in the second, whether due allowance has been made for that temporary trend of human attention which Dr. Johnson so happily called 'the clamour of the times' and to which 'scientific men' are little less immune than other intelligent and educated persons. No doubt, however, there were some among the group which answered Dr. Leuba's questions who honestly felt that the day of serious thought by instructed persons upon the problem of the future life was done.

Yet, curiously enough, one phase of that thought was just about to impress itself upon the general public with a force scarcely known before. The War with its shattering family losses woke great numbers to a keen interest in the problem of personal survival. The tragedy of 'In Memoriam' was reënacted in

ten thousand homes and in such fashion as to pay new tribute, not necessarily to Tennyson's logic, but to his understanding of the human heart and its inevitable influence upon the trend of human thought.

The Society for Psychical Research was also beginning to make its influence felt, and here again it was not so much its investigations or its cautious specific conclusions that counted among intelligent people, as it was the fact that men of scientific training and general eminence should recognize as worthy of study a problem that was at least collateral to that of the future life. My own interest in this approach to the question was but lukewarm. Yet the fact that all this was coming to pass in a day when problems relating to life beyond the grave were generally supposed to belong to the Index Expurgatorius of the scientific world seemed to have meaning. I could discern no reason why a naturalist like Wallace or an eminent physicist like Sir Oliver Lodge should speak with any especial authority upon the problem of immortal life. Sir William Crookes was unquestionably a master in the field of chemical analysis and some of his hypotheses with reference to the composition of the molecule had been truly prophetic; but one doubted whether all this entitled him to any more than ordinary respect when discussions of the survival of the human spirit were undertaken. Sir A. Conan Doyle is an ingenious romancer, a competent historian of a journalistic order, and a man whose multitudinous activities have touched many sides of the world's life.

Did he know more or less than the man in the street of the fate of the soul after its departure from the body? Mr. Henry Holt is a publisher of long experience, wide acquaintance with writers and with men of affairs, characterized, moreover, by rugged honesty, entire fearlessness, and a natural willingness to take an independent line with reference to any matter under discussion. Indeed, the ordinary 'conventional' view makes so little appeal that one rather suspects him of leaning, perhaps unconsciously, to the side of the otherwise-minded. In no sense irreligious, the suspicion of 'orthodoxy,' if he thought himself liable to incur it, would tend to give him pain. Such men as these stood naturally in the succession of 'scientific' thought as developed and expounded in the later decades of last century. Their competence to pronounce upon matters of science and upon many relating to the practical conduct of life would be recognized. All, moreover, might reasonably be expected to share the skepticism of science toward life beyond the grave if science were indeed skeptical. Yet in point of fact all these men were not only concerned with the problem of the soul's survival; with one possible exception they confessed themselves convinced of it and have shown a keen interest in the attempts to communicate with the spirits of the dead. I am not citing their experience because of the eminence of their attainments, the wide acquaintance with their names, or any peculiar authority which they may be supposed to possess in this field. Nor is it because the researches they have made or the conclusions reached

by them have ever made especial appeal to me. In point of fact they have not. But solely to illustrate the pertinacity with which faith in life beyond the grave clings to its place in the general scheme of man's thought. It is not merely the ignorant and superstitious who perpetuate it. The intellectually competent and the highly instructed are quite as sure to recur to its investigation and discussion. A single generation may conceivably find its attention diverted to other lines of thought that promise to be permanently exclusive, not merely of belief in immortality, but of any continuance of the subject as one fitted for the consideration of instructed people. But it will come back. The whole business proves to be germane to human thought. It concerns the generations, whether this particular generation hear or forbear. This survival-value was significant to me of the worth of the adventure and of the almost dishonorable mistake I should make in putting the question aside as irrelevant to a rational and practical man.

But if any adventure of faith were to be undertaken here, it seemed evident that it ought to be for large instead of little ends. It ought to be phrased in worthy terms. And here the people who called themselves 'psychics,' 'spiritualists,' and 'spiritists' gave me rather serious pause. They made claims to considerable knowledge of the situation beyond the curtain of death. They were almost dogmatic in their assertion of the fact of survival; but the glimpses that they seemed to give of the conditions under which the spirit survived and the manifesta-

tion of its activities, when, through the channel of some 'psychic' it managed to reëstablish connection with men and affairs, were far from alluring. There was so much that was unnatural and weird in the methods employed and so little that seemed worthy in the results obtained that this sort of spasmodic and incoherent communication lent a new terror to death. Here was little advance upon the descent of Ulysses to Hades and his converse with heroes there. This peeping and muttering in the gloom, this bad poetry scratched on grimy slates, these messages so scrappy and so cryptic from men and women whose earthly attitude was sane and clear, did about as much to discredit the whole business as their testimony to a doctrine of immortality did to justify a reasonable faith. It was clear that the basis for that must be found elsewhere.

What reply should be made, then, when experience faced me with its inquiry as to whether any faith in a future life was mine, and, if so, on what grounds I could justify it? The preceding pages will suggest an answer. The subject is a reasonable one for human contemplation because experience has shown it to be inevitable. It will not down; it refuses to be forgotten or permanently shelved; it demands as of right that we should at least establish a *modus vivendi* with it, and it implies that this must be of a positive and constructive sort — something better than a mere armed neutrality.

Furthermore, the longer I contemplated the greater arguments that have been set forth on the positive side from the day of Socrates to our own,

the less inclined I became to treat any of them with contempt. While none possessed conclusive validity, none was on the other hand quite absurd. If any one proved to have great survival-value it generally proved also to possess a measure of legitimate and rational appeal. The formal argument of Socrates in the 'Phædo' based on the nature of the soul might sometimes become a mere play on words which could hope to convince no thinking man to-day. Yet the great Dialogue itself is printed and reprinted, not alone in collected editions of Plato's works, but in pocket form to be carried about and read repeatedly. And this is right, for the deeper argument of the 'Phædo' makes a just appeal. This is partly contained in the words of Socrates, who believed, as has been already remarked, not because of his arguments, but rather argued because he believed; and it is set forth more cogently by the whole trend and atmosphere of the interview. 'I myself was strangely moved on that day,' says Phædo. 'I did not feel that I was being present at the death of a dear friend; I did not pity him, for he seemed to me happy . . . both in his bearing and in his words, so fearlessly and nobly did he die. I could not help thinking that the gods would watch over him still on his journey to the other world and that when he arrived there it would be well with him if it was ever well with any man.' Happy Phædo, thus to feel and to express the instinctive sense of a soul's superiority to death that perceiving men of unnumbered generations have had when watching a good man answer his final summons. Let us grant that the argument, if argu-

ment there be, is inconclusive in the strictly logical sense. The option, as logicians say, is not forced. None the less the trend and urge of the testimony presented is very great. The appeal of a good man's mastery of the circumstance of death always has been and always will be telling. The feeling with which one turns away that the end is not yet has a perfect right to influence both thought and conduct. It long has been, and I suspect always will be, an element in the formulation of a man's personal creed. This sort of conviction does not casually happen. It has reasons for being, some of them evident and easily formulated; others with probable sources in the subconscious; but it endures; it asserts its validity; and within certain limits already mentioned I gave that validity glad recognition. To survive death agrees with the nature and genius of the soul.

In like manner one comes to have a certain respect for the argument which is based upon the evident need of a new world to redress the balance of the old. Its premisses cannot be demonstrated beyond contradiction. But both the instinctive and the reasoned judgment of men inclines to the belief that truth is stronger than error, justice more enduring than tyranny. It was this sense of need that probably played a considerable part in turning the Hebrew mind toward the problem of immortality. The old theory had been that the good man prospered and the bad man suffered. It did not meet the facts. The good man's prosperity sometimes withered while the wicked was seen to be in great power and to flourish exceedingly. A man had a right to

his intellectual and moral sanity; and such sanity was threatened unless there could be redress for the manifest inequality and the seeming injustice of a considerable part of human experience. The cry for a redressing of wrong finally prevailed in mundane affairs. Tyrants were at last overthrown. The ambitions of the great protagonists of Self were ultimately thwarted. Napoleon is said to have remarked that God appeared to him generally to be upon the side of the heavier battalions. He was right — from the Napoleonic standpoint. The heavier battalions usually win the day. But he forgot, and it was his undoing, the invincible reserves of the years. Speaking 'in the large,' what Professor Cheyney has called 'the law of moral progress' holds. Great tyrannies are overthrown, great injustices are mitigated if not remedied. Society has at least a fighting chance. The heart and flesh of man cry out for a living God who shall note the fate of the individual amid all this 'cosmic weather' — so much of it bad — and shall finally equalize his lot. It is not a merely petulant or fretful cry. It is rather a sort of demand upon the universe in the interests of sanity and the general integrity of life. It is the sort of demand that man has a right to make. When Carlyle exclaimed, 'I do not want cheaper cotton, swifter railways . . . ; I want God, Freedom, Immortality,' he voiced this cry. He further implied that, where men are conscious of such fundamental wants and where the supply of them is not contradicted by clearly demonstrated scientific fact, they have a right, not only to ad-

vance their claim, but to read it into a general Bill of Rights. The great Bill of Rights of 1688 was read into the English Constitution because it embodied certain guaranties that Englishmen regarded as essential to the integrity of their individual and corporate life. They could not be free men or enjoy political health without them. When the United States of America came into being under a written constitution, one of the first things done was to adopt the ten amendments which echoed the English instrument and became the American Bill of Rights. These men were legislating along the line of their profoundest needs. They not only had a right to do so; they would have been recreant to their heritage of freedom if they had failed to exercise the right. The precise demands they made were, to be sure, subject of just debate when it came to definition. One age and one party might differ in its emphasis from another. But the great principles were generally agreed upon and generally hold.

My own view came to be that there was a fair and reasonable analogy between these cases. Man was in such large measure master of his world, subduing earth and sea to his bidding and even projecting his mind into the orbits and secrets of the stars, that he had a right to claim a field adequate to the free display of these powers. This field was evidently not to be found in what men call 'time.' He craved larger scope, ampler opportunity, more life than threescore and ten years could offer. There was no proof that the claim could not be met. There was abundant evidence that those who had advanced the claim,

living in the hope and expectation that it would be met, had in some real sense conquered death and seen 'time' in true perspective as a field to be cultivated neither with haste nor waste, but soberly and advisedly, in the fear of God and the service of men. The light of such a life did not seem meant to be put out when its flame was blown from the candle of the body by the breath of death. Indeed, a somewhat faulty analogy might be drawn from the fate of a candle-flame which, as an eminent astronomer has remarked, does not really disappear except to the watching eye of earth, but goes out into space still travelling as the light of Polaris and Sirius travels and is to be forever discerned if we had optical instruments of adequate accuracy and power.[1] If one objects, as many have done, that it is absurd to suppose that an issue of such moment as the creation of beings meant for indefinite if not infinite existence should be bound up with the life of so insignificant a planet as our earth, it is at once to be answered that such an objection begs the whole question and precludes the possibility of issues of the highest moment anywhere, since the universe is so vast that any issue wherever localized, though it were on the mightiest stars, Antares, Mira, or Betelgeuse, would find its local habitation and its term of life sinking into insignificance as compared with the whole of space and time. The fact is that to minds constituted as are ours everything must take place 'somewhere' and 'somewhen'; and we are so made

[1] Professor H. N. Russell, of Princeton University, in the *New York Times*, February 17, 1924.

for a universe and an eternity that we instinctively misprize our own place and our own day.

Here, then, in the history of the belief, in the ineradicable urge toward it, in the nature of the aspiring and questioning soul of man, in the need of a better vindication and judgment of the adventure of living than this life alone can furnish, in the teaching of such a master of life's secrets as Jesus Christ and its practical issue in the lives of a man like Saint Paul and of unnumbered disciples since, and in the entire lack of any conclusive evidence that death ends the soul's experience, appeared to me to be sufficient and valid ground for 'faith in immortality.' I write those words between inverted commas because they need definition. They are not meant to refer to a clearly defined dogma to be imposed upon another's belief or to stand as a barrier at the door of the Christian Church. This faith, rather, becomes a true adventure, a great hypothesis, which meets the need of the human soul and of the world's life, making for health, hope, and sanity, and worth putting to the test of the common day. A man does this when he lives so that, if his life goes on, a genuinely beneficent influence will be continued. He holds this faith when he chooses to guide his life by great principles rather than by little shifts and policies. He tests this hypothesis when, face to face with temptation to let the lusts of the flesh rule him, with their 'let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' he answers, 'No, for I would preserve such integrity as I may for life day after to-morrow; and there is so much hope of this that a kind of nobility

is lent to the keeping of body and soul clear of defilement now.' This is what is meant by saying that faith in life beyond death is needed in order to give a true value to time. For without this, though I doubt not that high ethical standards would long survive, it is undeniable that in many minds now half in revolt against what they think to be mere ethical 'convention,' the argument, 'let us do this or that, for we shall be dead a long time,' would appeal with renewed power. We have a right to counter upon that appeal exactly as we have a right to fight hookworm or tuberculosis. It is always debilitating like the one and in a vast number of cases it threatens the integrity of the soul as the other threatens that of the body. To accept faith in an eternal life is to live on the theory that experience will be long enough to justify every right effort, every sacrifice for truth and honor, all that makes for individual nobility and social health; and to justify this, not merely to the struggling and perhaps suffering soul which maintains the conflict, but to all men everywhere.

Such is the secret of that Judgment which has had fascination for all the great religions and has often been so luridly interpreted by Buddhist, Moslem, and Christian alike. The instructed man of to-day will not say much of hell-fire or of the golden streets and gates of pearl; but his faith looks, none the less, to such a revision of time's common values by eternal standards as shall consume the evil and crown the good; and shall demonstrate to all the perfect justice of this consummation. What struggle may remain to him in all this, what foes

and what allies, what memories of earth and what reknitting of old and dear associations, he leaves for the future to determine. His faith is a great and reasonable hypothesis by which he determines to guide his life and so test its worth. The Church long ago defined it as a 'confident and holy hope.' He is content to have it so.

THE END

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